BEAM SABER

A FORGED IN THE DARK GAME BY AUSTIN RAMSAY

THE GROWING CONFLICT

Insert Header art here

CREDITS

Beam Saber is designed by Austin Ramsay

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This game is dedicated to Christine Blight for her brilliant suggestions, and tireless support of my work and well being.

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PLAYTESTERS

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FIRST A WORD TO PLAYTESTERS (to be removed in final version)

Thank you so much for helping test this game! I’m really hoping that between all of our efforts, we can make Beam Saber into something that will be published under the Forged In The Dark catalogue. The game isn’t finished yet, and there’s still a lot I want to add, (you can find this in the Future Update Goals section) and a lot that I’m considering changing. If you'd like to support its development, I have a Patreon.

Please send your notes, recording links, play by posts, etc to BeamSaberRPG@gmail.com
As playtesters, you have a few responsibilities:

- This text is to be used in conjunction with the core Beam Saber rules.
- Please provide play notes about your experiences with the game. Ideally, this would be in the form of live streaming or audio recording. Written transcripts, or your notes from the session are good too, as are photos of the character and series Playbooks, and other game ephemera from your session.
- Please provide feedback about your experiences with the game. If there were problems that your group experienced with specific mechanics, the rules as written, the character sheets, or any other stumbling blocks during play, I want to hear about it. If there were things you particularly enjoyed, I'd love to hear about that as well.
- Offer problems, not solutions. When providing feedback, try to focus on the problems you encountered, and explain those in as much detail as you can. Don't worry about offering solutions to these problems, or whatever design you think might be better. I'm still interested in hearing about how you worked around these problems at the table.
- Lastly, tell me what you were excited about! The characters you met, the locations you explored, the obstacles you overcame (or fell to), and the mechanics you enjoyed! Despite its grounded tone, Beam Saber is still a game and those are meant to be fun.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREDITS....2
TABLE OF CONTENTS....4
INTRODUCTION....7
WHAT THIS BOOK IS....8
PLAYER RESOURCES....10
PILOT PLAYBOOKS....11
THE ARTIFICIAL....13
THE CAPTAIN....18
THE FOREWARNED....24
THE HERO....30
THE HIVE....35
THE PROXY....41
THE ROOKIE....47
THE TRANSFORMED....52
THE TUNER....57
THE WIELDER....63
SQUAD PLAYBOOKS....68
THE ACADEMY....70
THE CREW....74
THE DISMOUNTED....78
THE DOUBLE AGENTS....82
THE HUNTED....85
EXPANDED FACTION AND SQUAD RULES....88
BECOMING A DIRECT SUPERIOR....89
BEFORE YOU TAKE COMMAND OF A FACTION....89
FORMING A FACTION....89
FACTION MANAGEMENT....91
THE FACTION PHASE....97
ASSIGNING SQUADS TO MISSIONS....101
JOINING A FACTION'S LEADERSHIP....102

TRADING TIER FOR SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES....103
BUILDING A SQUAD FROM COHORTS....103
THE WAR AND OTHER CONFLICTS....104
THE STEEL MEADOWS....104
CALAZCON!....130
EXAMPLE VEHICLES....154
APPENDIX A: ALTERNATE RULES....173
ALTERING PLAYBOOKS....173
CONDENSED XP TRACKS....173
NARROW PILOT'S SEATS....174
CRAMPED COCKPITS....174
NEUROHELMETS REQUIRED....174
APPENDIX B: FUTURE PLANS....175

CHANGELOG FOR V0.7

- Added new cover art
- Corrected some headings in The Hunted squad playbook.
- Corrected the description of the Toughs Cohort that The Hunted squad playbook starts with.
- Fixed some minor typos
- Added a map for CalazCon! By Annie Johnston-Glick
- Added the CalazCon! intro story, An Uncanny Resemblance by Malaika Kirkwood
- Clarified that Dismounted Cohorts do not get vehicles.
- Added an incentive for using Forewarned Omens to take die results less than a 6.
- Clarified that the Forewarned's Always Ready discards any remaining dice in the prediction pool and then rolls a new set of prediction dice.
- Added the Steel Meadows map by Cory "Hadrian" McDaniel
- Added the Steel Meadows intro story, The Phantom Squid by Bryan Young
- Gave The Captain the "Assisted repair system [load 1]: Spend a Materiel point to take the Fix downtime activity while on a mission." and made the Hanger Bay [Load 0]. This change is due to the nature of the vehicle already implying that it has a hanger.
- Replaced The Rookie ability Pineapple Salad with the new ability "Death Flag: When you Cut Loose, you may choose to take a Collateral Die with a specific benefit and consequence. The benefit is that you may add up to 3 ticks to your Connection with the other Pilot instead of the normal 1 tick. The consequence is that they spend the entire next Mission in a Desperate Position (Assists and Abilities that modify Position still affect them)."

- Changed The Wielder's ability All In so that it provides a Connection Clock with The Weapon.
- Changed The Wielder's ability Hook to "Hook: Spend your Spark to make an obstacle or foe vulnerable with the same benefits as a successful Set Up action. You can spend a Quirk to refresh your Spark."
- Removed The Proxy's Living Lightning ability and moved its information to a Note about the playbook.
- Gave the Proxy the new ability "Monologue Bait: When you suffer Harm and don't resist it nor use Armor, you may ask the GM a question about its source that they must answer truthfully." to give the playbook some noir vibes.
- Modified the Proxy ability Malware Bytes to the following: "Malware Bites: You may spend your Spark to reveal how a Consequence you just suffered plays right into your master plan (this does not negate or resist the Consequence) or to push yourself when trying to break into encrypted information."
- Modified the Proxy ability In The Machine to the following: "In The Machine: If you have a machine's access codes, you may wrest control of it away from its operator with a successful Interface roll. If you or the machine are hurt, you will need to re-establish your control."
- Modified the Hive ability Many Hands to the following: "Many Hands: You may spend your Spark to have one of your bodies appear in an unexpected place, or to take an additional downtime activity."
- Modified the Hero ability Heart of Gold, Fists of Steel to the following: "Heart of Gold, Fists of Steel: You may spend your Spark to have an unexpected temporary ally join your efforts, or push yourself when inciting fervor."
- Added Veteran to all Playbooks (including the Rookie under a different name) for clarity purposes.
- Added rules for a Pilot to take over as their squad's Direct Superior.
- Added microfic journal entries by Cassandra Connors
- Changed the CalazCon! squad "The Hive" to "The Hornets" to minimize confusion with the Pilot playbook called "The Hive".

INTRODUCTION

It has been years since the Offworlders brought their War to Izya. Children born who have never seen the Tower without its hedgehog bristle of guns. Adults who never got to participate in its political system. Elders who can never dream of retiring because the dream has broken. And still The War on Izya grows.

Like dandelion fluff carried on the winds of humanity, it fell from the sky or was carried earthward on the backs of the unsuspecting. It found fertile ground in places where Izyans were dissatisfied with their lot and believed that support from above could help them reach what was due. However, it didn't need fertile ground; like most weeds it seemed to expand of its own volition. First a few "consultants," next a handful of platoons, then a regiment with its support personnel. Logistical roots would work their way into local buildings. Runners would spread out in search of new resources, both soft and material. Encampments would bud as the need arose. Always these things came about at the "request" of Izyans, or to protect the "interests" of the Offworlders and their allies. Until finally...

It bloomed.

A ragged messy thing, this blossom. Viciously pushing against the other weeds in the vicinity, always after more in the hopes that it can finally eliminate the competition. Inevitably through uncoordinated cooperation they choked out the other growths on Izya, leaving behind only that which could match their ruthless fortitude. The crushing, crumbling clutch of this growth at last reached a point where there was nothing left to be gained by this open confrontation, and so the keepers who had sown these seeds pruned back their mess.

"What a terrible thing it is that has happened here," they proclaimed. "This beautiful garden has gone to seed with the careless hands of its previous tenders. We will care for it. We will help it regrow. We will shape its future." So they cut back the weeds, rotate the crops, and encourage non-invasive species (at least the ones that will benefit them in the future).

Thus there was a time of careful planting and pruning. Though a fairly small and unimpressive plot, it held some sentimental value to the Offworlders, so they brought in more resources. Never quite enough, and during this time the saplings they cultivated were often strange. Some were too new, too green for this harsh environment. Others too loud and boisterous, pulling attention away from other

key parts of the garden's arrangement. Then there were the ones grown partially in labs; experimental strains meant to protect against threats improbable and imagined. All were planted in the garden.

So now the invasive weeds wait, mostly quiet but occasionally coming into conflict with other flora. Occasionally overrunning the Izyan species, often slowly but also in fits and starts. The gardeners plant, and watch, and wait because they know that eventually the right moment will come when it is time to plow under the locals to feed the garden. Until then...

The conflict continues to grow.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS

The Growing Conflict is a book containing supplemental rules for Beam Saber, so you will need that rule book to make full use of this one. Much like the alternate rules in Beam Saber, The Growing Conflict's contents are less tested than the main rules and thus there may be strange rules interactions that are not accounted for. Further, the rules herein, particularly the Faction management rules, are more complicated than the normal Beam Saber rules. This is stated not to discourage anyone from using them, but so that those who prefer simpler rules don't stumble into unexpected complications.

This book contains 10 new Pilot Playbooks:

- The **Artificial** is built for a Purpose.
- The **Captain** is a determined leader.
- The **Forewarned** is a knowledgeable seer.
- The **Hero** is a symbol of something greater.
- The **Hive** is a mind beyond.
- The **Proxy** an avatar of the absent.
- The **Rookie** an inexperienced and eager recruit.
- The **Transformed** is a person Changed.
- The **Tuner** is a creatively obsessed driver.
- The **Wielder** is an arm that holds The Weapon.

5 new Squad Playbooks:

- The **Academy** are the next generation.
- The **Crew** are bound by a shared Cause.
- The **Dismounted** are forgotten grunts.
- **Double Agents** are two faced bastards.
- The **Hunted** are on the run.

And expanded rules:

- Squads can form their own Faction.
- Players can manage a Faction.
- Players can assign Squads to Missions.
- Players can turn Cohorts into a Squad.
- Pilots can become their squad's Direct Superior.
- Alternate rules that explore how a Vehicle affects a Pilot's Load.

PLAYER RESOURCES

The **Pilot Playbooks** can be found here:

The **Pilot Character Sheets** can be found here:

The **Squad Playbooks** can be found here:

The **Squad Sheets** can be found here:

A wonderful fan by the name of Erik Rådman (https://twitter.com/erikradman) created these **fillable pilot and Squad sheets** which have been adapted for The Growing Conflict playbooks by Cory “Hadrian” McDaniel (https://twitter.com/hadrian):

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TXY2i6eRNcvnyTQ2jLM7Mv123sR_mDpf7KKRmq4_t3M/edit?usp=sharing

If you want to join the Beam Saber community, where you can find people to discuss the rules or a group to play with, we have a **Discord** server here: https://discord.gg/WuC8r5W

If you'd like to support my game design work, I have a Patreon.

PILOT PLAYBOOKS

INSERT DOUBLE PAGE PILOT PLAYBOOK ART HERE

The tools change constantly, but ultimately war is fought by people. All we've done is make the sticks and rocks sharper and sturdier over time.

People change too. To serve military needs, the Factions have pushed the boundaries of medical and technological research. Human psychic potential is no longer the apocryphal subject of rumor among most squads, but another resource for the brass to fight over. Proxies aren't just simple applications, but entities in their own right. Exodus has made strides in a variety of autonomous drones and others have followed suit. Humanity's children are growing up.

It's a lot to take in, and I'm only getting older. My youthful days as a priest serving the community in Hulinton are another lifetime ago. Conscripted and later betrayed by the Church of the Celestial Myriad, my faith shattered.

I'm just one man. One story in the chronicle of The War. There are countless others, heroes and villains, lives cut short, battles fought on and off the field, and miracles large and small. Does my story matter? Will I be remembered? Everyone asks themselves these questions. As a priest I would remind others that we are all part of the Myriad, bound to one another, celestial bodies enacting our gravity upon each other in ways both subtle and writ large.

But now? Well, I still think the metaphor holds, though it may not be as hopeful. Gravity brings asteroids crashing into planets, and stars explode. We never know what the ending of our story will be.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

INSERT SINGLE PAGE ARTIFICIAL PLAYBOOK ART HERE

I had dinner with a pleasant young woman in Journey City. She worked for the Society for Wider Understanding, but confided in me after a few drinks that she served a tour in “intelligence gathering of the hands-on sort”.

She’d found herself on the barrel-end of a rifle in an Exodus production facility during an infiltration. Exodus is developing mechanized infantry drones, and she had the unfortunate pleasure of meeting one of the latest prototypes. It had her dead to rights, but she claims it lowered the gun and motioned quickly—almost nervously—for her to leave.

Did she misinterpret some sort of lucky malfunction? I’m unsure.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE ARTIFICIAL

Built for a Purpose

There is a sureness in your existence. You've never worried about what you want to be when you grow up, or how to get your dream job, or where to retire. Your life has been planned from the start. Unfortunately plans don't survive contact with the enemy, and now you too are trying to figure it out as you go.

Who built you? Who was your previous owner, if any? How do those people or groups affect your current life?

CHOOSE THE ARTIFICIAL IF:

- You want to contend with why you were built

ARTIFICIAL XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session mark XP if you fulfilled your Purpose or addressed a challenge with understanding.

ARTIFICIAL STARTING ACTIONS

+1 Engineer. **Note:** This means you will have 8 total action points during Pilot creation, instead of the standard 10, because you will benefit from **Purpose Built**.

ARTIFICIAL ABILITIES

- **Purpose Built**: **This is the only ability you get when creating the Artificial**. Choose a Frame type: Small (size between a cat and child, -1 Scale), Medium (average adult size), or Large (size of a small automobile, +1 Scale). Choose a Purpose: Guard, Ruin, Acquire, Labor, or Discover. When you directly attempt to fulfill your Purpose, take +1d. Detail your Fuel. When you Cut Loose it must reference you refuelling and you don't roll, instead heal Stress equal to 5 minus the number of Scars you have. Gain 1 level of Internal Mechanism.

- **Integrate**: Using Engineer you can attach a machine to your Frame for the rest of the Mission, giving you access to its functions.
- **Super Charge**: When you Push Yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can also: act with extreme strength -- act with extreme speed.
- **Direct Link**: Spend 2 Stress to use a Pilot Action in place of a Vehicle Action.
- **Internal Mechanism**: Select a piece of Pilot Gear or Vehicle Gear you have access to; a Pilot scale version exists within your body. Reduce its Load by 1 (Minimum 0). It must be declared at the start of every mission. This ability is gained once through Purpose Built and can be taken a second time after that.
- **Specialized Design**: Pick another playbook. You gain access to all of the Specialist Pilot (except the custom Vehicle) and Specialist Vehicle Gear that is in that playbook.
- **Will Not Stop. Ever.**: When you take a Scar, you can choose to take a Level 1 Harm to not leave the scene; your Stress resets to zero as normal. When your Vehicle takes a Breakdown, you can choose to take a Level 1 Damage for it to not leave the scene; your Quirks refresh as normal. For both cases those around you are briefly stunned by your endurance.
- **Machine Precision**: You may spend your Spark to reroll an Action or Fortune Roll that would fulfill your Purpose. You must accept the second result, even if it is worse.
- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

ARTIFICIAL SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Inherent Armor** [Load 0]: The nature of your construction makes you more resistant to damage than others.
- **Lifelike Appearance** [Load 1]: Your outer shell makes you nearly indistinguishable

from a life form suitable to your Frame's size and shape.

- **Fine Long Range Transmitter** [Load 1]: A well made device necessary for sending data over distances greater than a couple of city blocks.
- **Fine Digital Connector** [Load 1]: A high quality device that allows you to expertly interface with digital machines.
- **Your custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

ARTIFICIAL SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Inconspicuous Style** [Load 0]: A plain paint job, a common frame, and panels that create a bland silhouette. This will make a vehicle less noticeable than it's load would indicate.
- **For Guard; Fine Machine Gun** [Load 1]: A finely made, fully automatic, anti vehicle cannon.
- **For Ruin or Labor; Fine Destruction Tools** [Load 2]: Finely made tools for smashing buildings, vehicles, and other large objects.
- **For Acquire, or Discover; Analytics Suite** [Load 1]: A collection of scanners useful for determining the composition of solids, liquids, and gasses.

EXAMPLE ARTIFICIAL GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- Who here underestimates what I am?
- Who here is afraid of me?
- What other sapient beings present were manufactured?
- What do they yearn for that their form prevents them from realizing?
- Who here envies me?

- Where can I push through that others cannot?
- Why do they stare?

EXAMPLE ARTIFICIAL STARTING BELIEFS

- They treat me like a person, so I will pursue their friendship.
- They are good with people and I can model myself after them.
- They are fragile. I will interpose my Frame to protect them.
- Their actions are illogical. I must observe them closely to improve predictions.

EXAMPLE ARTIFICIAL ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Zeta, a peaceful soldier
- Light, a reckless engineer
- Mohammed, an insightful student
- Rednine, a designated courier

EXAMPLE ARTIFICIAL STARTING BUILDS

- **Assistant**: Purpose Built, +2 Consort, +1 Finesse, +1 Survey
- **Construction**: Purpose Built, +1 Wreck, +1 Study, +2 Manipulate
- **Violence**: Purpose Built,+1 Struggle, +1 Wreck, +2 Battle
- **Hazard Disposal**: Purpose Built, +1 Bombard, +1 Manipulate, +2 Scan

INSERT SINGLE PAGE CAPTAIN ART HERE

When we first met, Vergil told me that the Myriad must have made me a captain because I just looked too damn good in the uniform. I preferred that to the truth: that they fast-tracked me because I had a talent for convincing others to go into battle against their better judgment.

There is a certain pride in having others in your command. You get to know them and their talents, and sometimes their lives. And if you're real lucky, you get a big damn ship with a lot of guns, which makes everyone feel much better about their job.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE CAPTAIN

A determined leader.

When things get bad soldiers look to their guns, officers look to their plans, and infiltrators look for a way out. The Captain looks to the future because their crew are already looking to them. Your people depend on you to care for them, and to spend them wisely. You'll do both before the worst is passed.

How long have you had your commission? How did you reach this position?

A NOTE ON THE CAPTAIN'S CREW AND VEHICLE

As the playbook's name implies, the Captain leads a crew of NPCs. Mechanically these NPCs function as extensions of the Captain; they control the Vehicle with no loss of intent or competence, but they also can not function separately from the Captain as a Cohort. Narratively they can be as fleshed out as the Captain's player wants. Some players will be extremely interested in the names, personalities, and lives of every member of their crew, while others won't mention them at all. Both ends of this spectrum are absolutely fine.

As it does have a crew beyond just the player's Pilot, the Captain's Vehicle is also much larger in scale than the Vehicles of other playbooks. The same rules regarding a Vehicle's Load and how that affects the fiction and mechanics still applies, the baseline for its size is just scaled up. This also means that characters can easily move around inside the Vehicle, and that other playbooks' Vehicles will interact with it differently, such as being easily transported by it.

CHOOSE THE CAPTAIN IF:

- You want to be the character who commands the big ship that supports the frontline pilots.
- You want to characterize playing an entire crew of people working together.

CAPTAIN XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with delegation or coercion.

CAPTAIN STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Command, +1 Maneuver

CAPTAIN ABILITIES

- **Dedicated Role**: Pick a type of Fire Team. All of your Fire Teams gain that type. If they already have that type, they instead get +1d to actions that suit that type.
- **Number One**: Gain a second in command Specialist Cohort who can use any of your abilities as if you were present. They are loyal to you, not the Squad.
- **Capital Ship**: Your Vehicle load limits are higher. Light: 5. Normal: 7. Heavy: 8.
- **Damn The Odds**: When you push yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: Ignore an entire Level of Damage -- Intimidate a group of lesser foes into retreating for now.
- **Stem To Stern**: You have perfect knowledge of the entirety of your Vehicle (function, staff, layout, etc). You are trained for any role in your vehicle.
- **Bright Idea**: You may spend your Spark to have great effect regardless of factors when making a Vehicle Action roll, or to Resist a consequence that affects one of your Fire Teams.
- **Duel**: When engaged in one on one combat, take +2d to resistance rolls (or spend 2 fewer Quirks; minimum 1) from consequences not caused by your opponent. Actions against your opponent that aren't from you have Risky position and Limited effect at best, regardless of any bonuses. If the duel ends due to outside interference, take 2 stress.
- **Dish The Hot Gauss**: when you reveal a dramatic secret to your foe, take +1d when you attack them during the current Mission.
- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

CAPTAIN SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Variable Aspect Specialized Energy Ray [Load 1]:** a handheld energy weapon that can be set anywhere between stun and kill.
- **Command Comms [Load 0]:** your vocal transmitter can send, not receive, encrypted messages over long distances.
- **Commander's Uniform [Load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then Load 2]:** a uniform befitting one in a position of command.
- **Your custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

CAPTAIN SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Alpha Team [Load 2]:** A fire team loyal to you. Their type is declared when you declare them as vehicle gear.
- **Ship Catapult [Load 1]:** provides increased effect for the first Vehicle Action taken by those launched from it.
- **Assisted repair system [Load 1]:** Spend a Materiel point to take the Fix downtime activity while on a mission.
- **Overclocked Central Computer (1 use) [load 1]:** spend for improved position when under fire. This refills at the start of each mission.
- **Fine heavy cannon [load 2]:** this well made cannon is powerful enough to punch through heavy armor, but is less effective at close range or against fast targets.
- **Hanger Bay [Load 0]:** Storage space for smaller vehicles with quick access to the outside.

EXAMPLE CAPTAIN GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- Where is their line weakest?

- Who needs reassuring?
- What's the history of their vehicle's model?
- What's the history of THEIR vehicle?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- What here is the greatest threat?
- Who is in control here?

EXAMPLE CAPTAIN STARTING BELIEFS

- They have battlefield experience; I'll learn what I can from them.
- They don't follow procedure, and I can use that.
- They're a loose cannon, so I'll need to protect those around them.
- They're an incredible pilot. I'll try not to hold them back.

EXAMPLE CAPTAIN ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Jean-Luc, a stoic vintner
- Khan, a vengeful leader
- Brannigan, an incompetent admiral
- Antilles, a courageous pilot

EXAMPLE CAPTAIN STARTING BUILDS

- **Tactical**: Bright Idea, Battle +2, Bombard +2
- **Marine**: Dedicated Role, Struggle +2, Prowl +1, Maneuver +1

- **Academy**: Stem To Stern, Consort +2, Engineer +1, Study +1
- **Intelligence**: Dish The Hot Gauss, Survey +2, Scan +2

INSERT SINGLE PAGE FOREWARNED PLAYBOOK ART HERE

We were ambushed about a dozen clicks northwest of Might while hitting an arms convoy, no idea how they knew.

The teal Neon Bolide that led the Norrish squad tore through us like a scythe through wheat. Wherever we targeted, she wasn't there, and we couldn't stop moving into her line of fire. Only half of us got out of there alive. Hopper was in the hangar for weeks of repairs. Julia stabbed Amherst under suspicion of selling us out.

But that pilot in the Bolide… none of us are willing to say it aloud, but she was some sort of Norrish wizard. I think she just *knew*.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE FOREWARNED

A knowledgeable seer.

Some in The War say that information is ammunition. If that's true, you've got the best ammo around since it doesn't even exist yet but you have access to it. Even if it's not always easy to use. Everyone knows what they say about those who are Forewarned, and that reputation can carry you a long way.

When do you choose to use your sight? What was your first vision?

CHOOSE THE FOREWARNED IF:

- You want to play with loaded dice.
- Having guaranteed failures sounds fun.
- Time is just an illusion.

FOREWARNED XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with surprise or advice.

FOREWARNED STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Survey, +1 Sway

FOREWARNED ABILITIES

- **Forearmed**: **This is the only ability you get when creating the Forewarned**. If you have zero dice in your Prediction Pool, roll Survey twice and store all of the die results in the Prediction Pool. Whenever you roll dice (such as Action rolls or Cut Loose) or the squad as a whole roll dice (such as for Engagement, Reward, or Entanglements), you MUST choose a Prediction die and set it aside before you make the roll. The roll has -1d but the chosen Prediction die counts as part of the roll. Discard any Prediction dice after they are chosen.
- **Harbinger**: When you have plenty of time to consult your prognostication tools,

describe an Omen for each point of Survey you have. Any pilot may describe how they use their knowledge of an Omen to use a die from your Prediction Pool as if they had the Forearmed ability. If they take a 4 or 5, they heal 1 stress, or 2 stress for taking a 1-3, as they steady themselves for a rough time. Each Omen may be used once.

- **Oracle**: When someone asks you for a prediction about their future and you choose to give them one: if it's harmful, add a 6 to the Prediction Pool when it comes true – if it's hopeful, add a 1 to the Prediction Pool when it comes true. If the Prediction comes true that pilot gains 1 XP.
- **Throw The Bones**: Before you make any roll that you could use Forearmed on, you may predict if it will be 1-3, 4/5, or 6. If you do, don't use any dice from the Prediction Pool. If you are correct, add the highest die from the roll AND a 6 to the Prediction Pool. If you are wrong add the lowest die rolled to the Prediction Pool.
- **Butterfly Effect**: When you Protect someone and: don't resist, add a 6 to the Prediction Pool -- roll to resist, add the lowest die rolled to the Prediction Pool -- use Armor or Spark, add a 1 to the Prediction Pool.
- **Always Ready**: spend your Spark to negate a consequence caused by a die from your prediction pool or to discard your prediction pool and roll a new one.
- **Sudden Prophecy**: When you Push Yourself, in addition to the normal benefits you may: mark a foe with misfortune -- declare an Omen as if you used the Harbinger ability -- ask the GM a question they must answer truthfully.
- **Special Consultant**: If you are asked for a Prediction by an NPC:
    - Employ your powers and if they act on what you tell them, the GM adds your Survey to the next squad or Rival goal roll that they are part of. In exchange your Squad gets +1d to their next Supply Roll.
    - Pretend to employ your powers and the person asking will believe you until they receive irrefutable evidence you were wrong. Then, they may seek revenge.

- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

FOREWARNED SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Prognostication tools [load 1]**: A set of tools, such as tarot cards, tea leaves, or crystals, that you can use to predict the future.
- **Fine maps [load 1]**: Several highly detailed physical or digital maps of a specific area.
- **Concealed palm pistol [load 0]**: A very small firearm with a very short range that is easily concealed.
- **Fortune Teller's outfit [Load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then Load 2]**: a set of clothes and props that give you the eccentric appearance querents expect.
- **Your custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

FOREWARNED SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Psionic amplifier [load 1]**: A device that increases the range or power of the user's psychic abilities.
- **Analytics suite [load 1]**: A collection of scanners that determine the composition of solids, liquids, and gases.
- **Magnification suite [load 1]:** Your vehicle is equipped with a wide variety of optical and digital zoom options that enhance the pilot's view of distant targets and marks them for allies.
- **Overclocked Central Computer (1 use) [load 1]:** spend for improved position when under fire. This refills at the start of each mission.

EXAMPLE FOREWARNED GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- Who here has heard of me?
- How will they react to bad news?
- What do I mean to those present?
- What here can I base an omen on?
- What omens are around me?
- Who's most afraid of me?
- What is about to happen?

EXAMPLE FOREWARNED STARTING BELIEFS

- They do not believe in fate. I will show them the truth.
- They are doomed. I will try to lessen their suffering.
- I know a mark when I see one.
- I can't See them?! Why?

EXAMPLE FOREWARNED ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Thomas, the prophesied
- Cleo, a convincing fake
- D3L-PH1, a powerful algorithm
- Cassandra, a loud liar

EXAMPLE FOREWARNED STARTING BUILDS

- **Charlatan**: Forearmed, +2 Consort, +1 Sway, +1 Finesse.

- **Paladin**: Forearmed, +2 Struggle, +1 Battle, +1 Consort
- **Spy**: Forearmed, +2 Prowl, +1 Sway, +1 Consort.
- **Receiver**: Forearmed, +2 Scan, +2 Study.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE HERO PLAYBOOK ART HERE

We all heard about Herta's Bastion. I had only been captain for about a year when the Jovangellians managed a successful deep infiltration of the Myriad border and eliminated the garrison's command in a surprise night attack.

Living up to cor name, Saint Gayatri Dawn arrived with the rising sun, piloting Dew's Transience. Co single-handedly punched a hole in the siege line under heavy fire and strode into the center of town, cor AWV still smoking.

Some desperate construction workers, rallied by Dawn's arrival, joined up with the remaining troops in Herta's Bastion. They rigged up some CWVs and pushed back against the weakened Jovangellians. The Saint, however, would not see the result of cor act. Now there is a statue in the center of town.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE HERO

A symbol of something greater.

There are many famous combatants in The War. Known for numerous kills, clever plans, or innovative designs, but they don't provide the fuel needed to win. The Hero provides hope to the masses and leaders so that they can work for a future with less blood. Once that day arrives you can rest, but until then you'll be the guiding light they need.

How did you become a symbol of your cause? What does the symbol mean to you?

CHOOSE THE HERO IF:

-

HERO XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with notoriety or camaraderie.

HERO STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Consort, +1 Battle

HERO ABILITIES

- **For the People**: If your squad has at least 1 Heart, add +1d to a roll when you proclaim your beneficence and you aid nearby civilians with your action.
- **For the Cause**: If you have a positive Relationship with your Patron Faction, add +1d to a roll when you proclaim their beneficence and then aid their public goals.
- **Martyr**: When you take Harm/Damage from Protecting a teammate and don't resist it, gain 1 XP. If you start a mission with Harm the squad gains rep equal to the total Levels of Harm you have.
- **Show The Way:** When you lead a group action and get a result of 4-5, everyone

that participated takes +1d on their next roll (Resistance, Action, or Fortune).

- **Heart of Gold, Fists of Steel**: You may spend your Spark to have an unexpected temporary ally join your efforts, or push yourself when inciting fervor.
- **Speak Softly**: When you push yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: Speak with the weight of all you represent -- have civilians come to your aid.
- **Carry A Big Stick**: If you got a 4+ on a roll to offer a peaceful solution, you get +1d in combat for the rest of the mission against anyone that refused your offer.
- **Foiled Again!**: Spend 1 Quirk or 2 Stress to negate a Rival Move.
- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

HERO SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **A badge of your cause [load 0]:** When you show others this handheld object, they know you are an important agent of your cause.
- **Iconic Outfit [load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then load 2]:** Some might call it a costume, but you know it to be the uniform of your station.
- **Light armor [load 1]:** Concealable armor designed to make you look unkillable.
- **Fine propaganda [load 1]:** a sheaf of pamphlets, a stack of posters, a pre-recorded holo-vid, or something similar.
- **Your custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

HERO SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **A large symbol of your cause** [load 1]: A banner, legendary sword, or other object that emphasizes your connection to your cause.

- **Iconic Style** [load 0]: Your vehicle's appearance makes it instantly recognizable to anyone who sees it. Detail how it's so unique.
- **Signature Weapon or Tool** [Load 1]: A weapon or tool, that is not more effective at dealing damage, but has increased effect when used to inspire.
- **Deployable cover** [load 1]: A portable, collapsible wall that can be locked into place, creating an instant barricade.

EXAMPLE HERO GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- Who here has heard of me?
- Who here knows who I REALLY am?
- What do I mean to those present?
- Who can I convince to follow me?
- Who will try to take advantage of my presence?
- Who's most afraid of me?
- Why do they follow or reject my cause?

EXAMPLE HERO STARTING BELIEFS

- They don't believe in my cause, but I will convince them of it.
- They support my cause zealously, and I will temper their fervor.
- They look up to me. I won't let them down.
- They consistently do the right thing. I should be more like them.

EXAMPLE HERO ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Steve, a reluctant warrior.

- Uso, a kind killer.
- Rusty, a young zealot.
- Villa, an opportunistic revolutionary.

EXAMPLE HERO STARTING BUILDS

- **Revolutionary**: Speak Softly, +2 Prowl, +1 Struggle, +1 Interface.
- **Mascot**: Carry A Big Stick, +2 Sway, +1 Survey, +1 Maneuver
- **Shield**: Martyr, +2 Maneuver, +1 Command, +1 Scan.
- **Spear**: Heart of Gold, Fists of Steel, +2 Command, +1 Battle, +1 Bombard.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE HIVE ART HERE

When you were a young girl you came running to me with a scraped knee. I tried to comfort you, but you weren't having it. Your world was crashing down around you, and I didn't know what to do.

Years later, when you looked so numb after a mission, I think we both knew that feeling all too well, yet I still didn't know what to do.

How liberating it would be to truly touch minds with others. To not feel so walled off from them all the time. I've heard stories about breakthroughs in psychic research. Could we really understand each other in such a way? Would it help fill the hole this angry, frightened old man left in you?

—Letter from Harrow Gray to Keiko Tuesday, unsent

THE HIVE

A mind beyond

As humanity's psychic prowess grows, so too do the limits of what is possible using only the mind. You are one such possibility. Perhaps you are a natural occurrence, an attempt by an intimate group to become closer, or even a hardened few so focused on a singular task as to become one. You are not any of those people, though who they were does influence who you are. You are not any of those bodies, though your existence is reliant upon them. You are The Hive and you are the whole.

A NOTE ON THE HIVE AND CONSENT

The Hive is written from the perspective that all bodies within have entered with enthusiastic consent. There is no question about mind control, blackmail, abuse or any other method of forcibly inducting a person into a group. All the bodies are present of their own free will. That said, there ARE stories to be told that deal with those topics, and if everyone playing is comfortable with exploring them via your character, feel free to pursue such tales.

Do the bodies have their own personalities when they are part of The Hive? Do they only express The Hive's identity?

When a body leaves The Hive but is still alive, how do they feel? Are they at peace for their contribution to The Hive? Do they feel abandoned or heartbroken? Are they excited for their return to life as an individual?

CHOOSE THE HIVE IF:

-

HIVE XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with understanding or coordination.

HIVE STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Survey, +1 Consort

HIVE ABILITIES

- **The Hive: This is the only ability you get when creating the Hive.** Your character is a psychic entity that exists between the six bodies which inform your personhood. When you would suffer Level 2 or 3 Harm or Damage, it becomes Level 1 instead as your bodies can fill in for ones that are currently less effective. You have a 4-Tick clock that starts full and represents your bodies. When a body is removed from The Hive (such as when it would die or is released), remove a Tick. If you can't remove a Tick, suffer Level 4 Harm as there are now insufficient bodies to sustain you. Refilling a Tick requires a Long Term Project to incorporate a new body.
- **One For All:** Remove a Tick from your Body Clock to fill your healing clock or to negate a Consequence.
- **All For One:** When a Tick is removed from your Body Clock gain 1 XP. When you voluntarily remove a Tick, gain an additional 1 XP.
- **Public Induction:** Take +1d when you work on a Long Term Project to refill the Body Clock. When you gain a Tick in your Drive Clock roll 1d on any incomplete Long Term Projects to refill the Body Clock.
- **Organized Operation:** When you push yourself, choose one of the following in addition to the normal benefits: coordinate your bodies as a small gang - assist an ally on their next roll by spending only 1 Stress.
- **Many Hands:** You may spend your Spark to have one of your bodies appear in an unexpected place, or to take an additional downtime activity.
- **My Name Is Legion:** There are now 8 bodies in your Hive. Increase your Body Clock to 6-Ticks. You can remove a Tick from your Body Clock to change a Dire Action roll to a 6.
- **Spawnling:** You can remove two Ticks from your Body Clock to create a Fire Team with a type of your choice and the Loyal edge in addition to any other edges and flaws you select. This Fire Team is the same type of entity as you are, and the two

bodies you removed from The Hive are the foundation of this new entity.

- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

HIVE SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **A Fine Group Meal** [load 2]: Shared meals are an important part of group cohesion, and your nature doesn't change that.
- **Inconspicuous Clothing** [load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then load 2]: A student's uniform, janitor's outfit, or other clothing that won't draw attention.
- **Heavy Weapon Kit** [load 4]: A lightened version of a vehicle scale weapon that must be crewed by two people.
- **Personal Emblem** [load 1]: So long as someone is thinking about this item, you know where the item is and can project your powers as if you were present.
- **A set of identical Vehicles OR one crewed Vehicle** [Load 0]: Your bodies either work independently in their Vehicles or all together in a single Vehicle. Decide when you create your Vehicle.

HIVE SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **A Small Armory** [load 1]: A collection of infantry weapons and body armor.
- **A Mobile Kitchen** [load 2]: A cramped kitchen able to serve up a limited menu.
- **Several Hand Tool Sets** [Load 1]: A variety of human-scale tool sets that a pilot can swap their Load for if needed.
- **Fine Shield or Forcefield** [load 1]: An extremely sturdy shield made of advanced materials or electromagnetic forces.
- **A Mobile Infirmary** [load 2]: An undersized facility to help with first aid and triage.
- **An Unusual Group Technique** [load 2]: A set of items that are not especially

effective alone, but have increased effect when used in concert by a team of people.

EXAMPLE HIVE GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- What would convince them to join with me?
- How do they feel about my bodies?
- Which of my bodies did they know before joining me?
- Which of my bodies makes them most uncomfortable?
- Have they encountered others like me before?
- Which of my bodies is most suited to this task?
- How can I get them to [X]?

EXAMPLE HIVE STARTING BELIEFS

- They fear me because they do not understand what I offer. I will help them understand.
- They want to join me because they do not understand the commitment.
- They have impressive skills. I would like to add them to me.
- One of my bodies knows them from before. We will certainly have misconceptions about each other.

EXAMPLE HIVE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Pain, a ruthless leader.
- Emma, a cold mother.
- Karl, a neighborly idealogue.

- Jim, a cruel narcissist.

EXAMPLE HIVE STARTING BUILDS

- **Choir**: The Hive, +2 Sway, +1 Consort, +1 Study.
- **Wolves**: The Hive, +2 Struggle, +2 Battle
- **Brain Trust**: The Hive, +2 Interface, +2 Engineer
- **Grift**: The Hive, +2 Sway, +2 Finesse.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE PROXY ART HERE (The Proxy shown in a desk mounted holographic display looks down at the murdered body of their creator who looks nearly identical to them)

Scratch was… interesting. The quirky proxy with an ever-changing digital wardrobe would not have been my first choice as a liaison between the Cenotaph and Myriad command. I have to admit they grew on me, though I never did fully trust them.

We often think of proxies as autonomous digital shadows—ghosts *out* of the machine, so to speak. Many wandered outside the chapel at Hulinton, ephemeral epitaphs for the dead. They did not ask to be here in this world any more than the rest of us. Small wonder that some of them should start to involve themselves in the terrors of The War more actively.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE PROXY

An Avatar of the Absent

Those of flesh often can't imagine that you have paid the costs of The War. How could you know what it is like to have a childhood interrupted by horror, a parent stolen by violence, or a government that has cast you aside? Simple: You were born to the same world as the humans. At some point you were commanded to find information about a terror. Later your creator was killed or went missing. Without a human's support your legitimate options were greatly curtailed by the government. Now The War has commanded you to battle; perhaps this is your chance for legitimacy...

A NOTE ON THE PROXY

You have no physical body as you are a digital entity and cannot be affected by, nor interact with, physical objects. Your Pilot Load is a temporary part of your digital body and any Pilot Gear you declare is digital allowing you to use it on AR entities. You move freely through the AR and can inhabit digital machines so long as you only show yourself in its audio and visual displays. You should be occupying the AR around your physical squadmates and not exist in your own side reality; you are on digital billboards and monitors, not inhabiting an abstraction of "the web". This includes getting Harmed if the object being occupied is damaged.

When you inhabit your Vehicle you have full control over it, and use Vehicle Actions as normal. You can not exist outside of digital machines. Attempting to control or change hostile machines is always dangerous.

You use Pilot Actions in the AR and Interface is ONLY used for editing the behaviour of non-sapient digital entities. It's not for digital combat, observing a system, moving through a digital space, etc. Those are covered by their respective Pilot Actions.

CHOOSE THE PROXY IF:

- You want to have a distant and complicated relationship with your body.
- You want to engage in creative problem solving and come at obstacles sideways.
- You want to inhabit and explore the secondary geography of Augmented Reality, often alone.

PROXY XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with your creator's identity, or secret knowledge.

PROXY STARTING ACTIONS

+1 Consort, +1 Interface, +1 Study

PROXY ABILITIES

- **Monologue Bait**: When you suffer Harm and don't resist it nor use Armor, you may ask the GM a question about its source that they must answer truthfully.
- **Send Attachment:** Spend 1 Stress to instantly travel through unbroken digital lines to a machine you know well, or to a place you have been summoned.
- **A Quick Search:** When you digitally gather information as a flashback it costs 1 fewer Stress (minimum 0).
- **Malware Bites**: You may spend your Spark to reveal how a Consequence you just suffered plays right into your master plan (this does not negate or resist the Consequence) or to push yourself when trying to break into encrypted information.
- **Cyber Snoop:** When you push yourself, in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: plant false information -- conceal your digital tracks
- **In The Machine:** If you have a machine's access codes, you may wrest control of it away from its operator with a successful Interface roll. If you or the machine are hurt, you will need to re-establish your control.
- **Connect The Dots:** When you Gather Information, you can ask 1 extra question on a 4+, or 2 extra questions on a 6. When you fill a Connection Clock, you may ask 1 additional question about the other Pilot.
- **My Memory Is Admissible Evidence:** At any time you can play audio and video of events that you witnessed through a machine you have access to.

- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

PROXY SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

Note that because of the Proxy's purely digital existence their specialist and standard Pilot gear should be interpreted as digital versions, which allows them to affect AR entities. For example, if the Proxy declares that they have a sword, they can use it to attack a digital virus.

- **Fine Personal Stealth Program** [Load 1]: Some Proxies can alter their appearance, allowing them to blend into their surroundings.
- **Fine Remote Vehicle Control** [Load 1]: An excellent tool allowing a pilot to remotely control a vehicle without any degradation of intent.
- **Fine Digital Scanner** [Load 1]: Helps when trying to discern the nature of digital entities and any changes they've caused.
- **"High Priority" Comm Decoder** [Load 1]: This device gives you the back channels for reaching anyone's personal communicator, but that doesn't mean they know, or care, who you are.
- **Self Destruct Program** [Load 2]: A program that helps you cause the currently inhabited machine to destroy itself.
- **Your custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

PROXY SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine Holo-Projector** [Load 1]: a well made device used to visualize the AR or specific images.
- **Analytics Suite** [Load 1]: A collection of scanners useful for determining the composition of solids, liquids, and gasses.
- **Fine Retrieval Program** [Load 1]: Used to find and acquire data.

- **Fine Broadcast System** [Load 1]: Excellent speakers and transmission unit allowing the user to broadcast audio and video.

EXAMPLE PROXY GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- What are they trying to hide?
- Who wants to know their secrets?
- Who here wants to capture me?
- Who here mistreats their proxy?
- What here is not what it appears to be?
- How connected are they to the AR?
- Where do they most often connect to the AR?

EXAMPLE PROXY STARTING BELIEFS

- I know their secrets and will keep them under my thumb.
- I don't know their secrets, so they are dangerous.
- Their tenacity in pursuit of knowledge is commendable. I'll listen to their opinions.
- I have spoken to their proxy. I worry they won't see me as a person.

EXAMPLE PROXY ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Bonzai, a friendly proxy
- Clippy, an annoying app
- Alan, an exiled hacker

- Rosalind, an exalted programmer

EXAMPLE PROXY STARTING BUILDS

- **Trojan:** Cyber Snoop, +1 Interface, +2 Engineer, +1 Prowl
- **Chat Bot:** Monologue Bait, +1 Consort, +2 Sway, +1 Survey
- **Search Engine:** Connect The Dots, +1 Study, +2 Survey, +1 Scan
- **DDOS:** In The Machine, +2 Destroy, +2 Wreck

INSERT SINGLE PAGE ROOKIE ART HERE

Eagerness, terror, or both. That’s what shines in the eyes of new recruits who’ve never seen combat. If war is a sculptor, then rookies are the often unwilling clay molded by its terrible hands. You should know, Keiko. How did it feel when they conscripted you? How does it feel now?

Time and battle may grind us down, but the rookies have hope. Potential stretches out before them, the idea that one soldier could make a real difference. If we pay enough attention, we could learn something from them. And maybe there wouldn’t be a need for rookies anymore.

—Letter from Harrow Gray to Keiko Tuesday, unsent

THE ROOKIE

An inexperienced and eager recruit

None of us should be in this situation, but especially not you. Even if you volunteered, The War wasn't supposed to be like this. Sure it wouldn't be easy, but there was nobility in protecting your loved ones with the sweat of your brow and the will in your heart.

How did you end up in The War? What did you imagine it would be like?

CHOOSE THE ROOKIE IF:

- You want your pilot to start off innocent and grow towards their Tragedy.
- You want to start out weaker than other playbooks but have access to powerful abilities.
- You want to cause problems and be rewarded for it.

ROOKIE XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with kindness or something foolish.

ROOKIE STARTING ACTIONS

None. You're green as summer wheat. **Note:** This means you will have 7 total action points during Pilot creation, instead of the standard 10.

ROOKIE ABILITIES

- **Learn Quick Or Die**: **This is the only ability you get when creating the Rookie**. You do NOT have a Tragedy. Permanently fill in 1 box on 1 XP track. Only Rookies can take Rookie abilities.
- **Trooper**: Switch to a Playbook other than The Rookie. Gain that playbook's starting actions (up to a maximum of 3 or, if your squad has the Mastery upgrade, 4), and a Tragedy appropriate to your experiences thus far. Keep any Rookie abilities you have earned.

- **How We Did It Back Home**: You can move up to two actions into different attributes. This can give you up to 5 actions in attributes, and as few as 2 as well. This will increase and decrease the maximum Attribute ratings for Resist rolls as appropriate, and also changes what Attribute the shifted Action generates XP for on Desperate rolls.
- **A Rash Youth**: When you strike back at someone who has hurt a friend, take improved effect. If your action succeeds, heal 1 stress.
- **Fool Child**: when you accept Collateral Dice gain 1 XP in any track.
- **Beginner's Luck**: When you get a 4+ result on an Action roll, you can remove the highest die to refresh your Spark (this can turn a success into failure, or crit into a normal success if the two 6s are the only successful dice). Spend your Spark to change your die result into a 4.
- **Death Flag**: When you Cut Loose, you may choose to take a Collateral Die with a specific benefit and consequence. The benefit is that you may add up to 3 ticks to your Connection with the other Pilot instead of the normal 1 tick. The consequence is that they spend the entire next Mission in a Desperate Position (Assists and Abilities that modify Position still affect them).
- **Watch The Kid**: When you push yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: Roll dice equal to your Connection Ticks with another pilot instead of an action – Reduce the cost by 1 Stress.
- **Picked A Few Things Up**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

ROOKIE SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

None. You have to earn it first, though you do get:

- **A standard Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you by your superiors. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

ROOKIE SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

None. You aren't worth the Materiel.

EXAMPLE ROOKIE GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- What here reminds me of home?
- Who here is from my hometown?
- Who here is willing to teach me?
- Who here is as scared as me?
- Who else here is new?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- How can I get them to [X]?

EXAMPLE ROOKIE STARTING BELIEFS

- They aren't interested in knowing me. I'll find out why.
- They've got my back, so I'll make sure to have theirs.
- They keep holding me back, but I need to grow!
- They're so strong! I'm gonna model myself after them!

EXAMPLE ROOKIE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Jenkins, a worried recruit.
- Brock, a parental NCO.
- Chantelle, a cautious medic.
- Hikaru, a reckless pilot

EXAMPLE ROOKIE STARTING BUILDS

- **Farmhand**: Learn Quick Or Die, +2 Wreck, +1 Maneuver, +1 Manipulate
- **Student**: Learn Quick Or Die, +2 Study, +2 Consort
- **Athlete**: Learn Quick Or Die, +2 Prowl, +2 Wreck
- **Criminal**: Learn Quick Or Die, +2 Prowl, +1 Finesse, +1 Struggle

INSERT SINGLE PAGE TRANSFORMED ART HERE

What the *fuck*, Shark? We scouted that place in advance, they were staffed by a skeleton crew with no AWV presence! Now I have to go tell Ripper that not only do we *not* have one of the Myriad's best medical researchers to turn over, but that your AWV is trashed and your radio is out so you're *texting* me?

"She turned into a giant lizard"? I don't know what you're on, but pull yourself together. I'll talk to Ripper, but you're on thin ice. We'll need to go to ground for a while, maybe we can find a materiel shipment to make up for your fuck up.

—Messages from Harrow "Demon" Gray to Amherst "Shark" Mayrand

THE TRANSFORMED

A person Changed.

What they did to you was unconscionable. Or maybe you volunteered. Or were born this way and grew into it. In any case that first time you Transformed you became power incarnate. Perhaps your true self. It'll have to do.

How connected do you feel to your Other self? What do you feel towards those who made you like this?

CHOOSE THE TRANSFORMED IF:

- You want to explore otherness and what it means to be outside of society.
- You want to play a cool monster that can breathe fire and has laser eyes.
-

TRANSFORMED XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with understanding or violence.

TRANSFORMED STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Battle, +1 Manipulate.

TRANSFORMED ABILITIES

- **Something Other**: **This is the only ability you get when creating the Transformed**. Create your Other in the same way that you would a Vehicle. It uses the same rules as a Vehicle. To transform between Pilot and Other (an entity that operates on the same scale as Vehicles) during a Mission you MUST spend 1 stress. Gain the scale and gear of each form. If the Other suffers Level 4 Damage, it is unavailable until replaced like a Vehicle.
- **Secret Move:** Spend your Spark to push yourself in combat or to manifest the

traits of an object you can touch.

- **Not Finished Yet!:** Gain a number of bonus dice (or reduce the number of Quirks spent to a minimum of 1) to your resistance rolls equal to your highest level of Harm or Damage.
- **Unusual Appetites**: Gain the “Hunger” Tragedy and detail what you must consume. Indulging your Hunger never physically hurts you. When you sate your Hunger to a disturbing degree, refresh 1 Quirk.
- **Blurring the Line**: when you push yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can also: partially transform into declared Other gear but at pilot scale -- drastically alter your appearance.
- **Metamorphosis**: you can spend 1 Quirk in place of 2 stress anytime you need to spend stress. When you spend 1 Drive clock, you undeclare all your Pilot or Other gear in addition to one of the normal options.
- **Expose Weakness**: When doing a Set Up Action take +1d. The pilots that use your Set Up Actions get improved effect in addition to other benefits they’d receive.
- **Not My Final Form**: When you take a Scar or Breakdown describe how your Pilot or Other begins to mutate, and the GM will let you know when the mutation is complete. On completion you clear both your Pilot and Other Load, and refresh all of your Quirks and Stress.
- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

TRANSFORMED SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Inconspicuous Clothing** [load 0, unless it’s a secondary outfit then load 2]: A student’s uniform, janitor’s outfit, or other clothing that won’t draw attention.
- **Mild Mild Mist** [load 0]: a single dose of a vapor that induces a pleasant, calm mood.

TRANSFORMED SPECIALIST OTHER GEAR

- **Fine melee weapon** [Load 1]: Your Other's excellent melee weapon such as tail spikes, a horn, or claws.
- **Fine directed energy weapon** [Load 1]: Your Other's powerful ability to coalesce a highly visible beam of thermal energy useful for melting through targets but prone to overheating.
- **Fine flamethrower** [Load 1]: Your Other is able to fire a stream of burning liquid that is horrendously effective against unarmoured or lightly armoured targets.
- **A terrifying visage** [Load 0]: Spikes, scales, uncanny muscles, and other features make your Other terrible to behold.
- **Inhuman Senses** [Load 1]: One of your Other's senses can reach beyond the human equivalent. When you declare this gear, detail how that sense is different.

EXAMPLE TRANSFORMED GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- Who here knows what I am?
- Who else here has an Other?
- What here is connected to my transformation?
- How will they react when I transform?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- Where is the best place to transform?
- What here is useful to my Other?

EXAMPLE TRANSFORMED STARTING BELIEFS

- They would make a good candidate for the transformation. I will test their interest.

- They fear my Other. I will work to make sure they don't fear me.
- They defended me in spite of my Other and I will be forever grateful for that.
- Their vehicle is a second body to them. Let’s find the limits of that connection.

EXAMPLE TRANSFORMED ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Shō, a protective student
- Eren, a fierce soldier
- Banner, a selfless scientist
- Ditto, a versatile parent

EXAMPLE TRANSFORMED STARTING BUILDS

- **Student**: Something Other, +2 Study, +2 Consort
- **Newborn**: Something Other, +2 Survey, +2 Hunt
- **Fugitive**: Something Other, +2 Prowl, +1 Finesse, +1 Scan
- **Accident**: Something Other, +2 Destroy, +2 Wreck

INSERT SINGLE PAGE TUNER PLAYBOOK ART HERE

I’m not too handy with a wrench. I think I manage to keep Hopper on his feet through some combination of electrical tape and spite. Dredge’s Magpie was something else entirely. Co said it was to aid in collecting the bodies of the fallen, but there was more to it than that. It was a carefully-honed extension of corself.

I envy those pilots who can do more than keep the legs from falling off their AWV. There’s a special sort of artistry in seeing a heavily modified or genuinely one-of-a-kind vehicle, even if it can be terrifying to be on the opposite side of the battlefield from one.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE TUNER

A creatively obsessive driver.

When a machine comes off of the production line it's a Boring. Dead. Thing. Maybe it was built by the warm hands of artisans. Maybe it was made by the cold app controlled manipulators of a factory. Both create dead things made to the bland specifications of the lowest bidder. You though, you create ART. You tweak and modify and tune to your exacting desires giving life to the unliving. Show them all the brilliance of your work.

Why did you start modding vehicles? What won't you modify?

CHOOSE THE TUNER IF:

-
-

TUNER XP TRIGGERS

A Tuner earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with technical skill or piloting.

TUNER STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Engineer, +1 Maneuver.

TUNER ABILITIES

- **On The Fly Adjustments:** Declare Vehicle Load as normal. Any base Vehicle Load (not from Abilities or Squad Upgrades) that doesn't have gear in it can be assigned as a +1d to a Vehicle Action. Each Action can only have +1d assigned to it. At any time spend 3 stress to move a bonus to a new Action. If additional gear is declared, the Pilot decides which assigned +1d is removed.
- **Last Minute Change:** During a Mission you may uninstall a non-Junked piece of Vehicle gear by making an Engineer action roll.

- **Just. A Bit. More.:** When you push yourself with a Vehicle action, in addition to the normal benefits you can choose to move 1 point from a different Vehicle action to the one you are currently using. This may not increase the action above your normal maximum (3, or 4 with Mastery).
- **Gear Head:** You know exactly what parts (manufacturer, model, year, etc) went into a machine.
- **Weight Saving:** When you declare a piece of vehicle gear you may decide that it's an Extra Light version. Extra Light gear is 1 Load lighter (min 0). If it becomes Load 0, it has 1 use that is refilled at the start of the next Mission. If it becomes Load 1 or higher, it has 2 uses. If the gear already has a limited number of uses, reduce that amount by 1 (min 0) instead.
- **Art By Another Name:** You may spend your Spark to push yourself when modifying an object, or to cause a temporary ceasefire as the combatants are awed by the deftness of your craft.
- **Quick Swap Mounts:** Junked Vehicle gear can be replaced with a non-Junked, identical piece of gear at the start of Downtime for free.
- **Self Experimentation:** Tuner abilities that affect your Vehicle can be used on their Pilot equivalents as well.
- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

TUNER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine engineering tools** [Load 1]: Well-made tools used for fine mechanical work.
- **Your mundane vehicle** [Load 0]: Your personal daily use vehicle. It is fast and Load 0, or slow and Load 1, your choice. It uses the rules of a Temporary Mundane vehicle in the Beam Saber rule book. If it's destroyed, replacing it is a Long Term Project.

- **Blueprints for a machine or vehicle** [Load 1]: A print out or digital file containing designer notes and builder plans.
- **Tickets to The Show** [Load 0]: Enough tickets for you and the other pilots to get into the common area of the race, vehicle exhibition, or trade show.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle you've modified to be suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

TUNER SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine mobility suite** [Load 2]: An excellent grapple system, jump jets, foot wheels, or other mobility system.
- **Light mobility suite** [Load 1]: A grapple system, jump jets, foot wheels, or other mobility system modified to be less cumbersome.
- **Sponsor Decals** [Load 0]: Your Vehicle is covered in the logos and catchphrases of a sponsor. If you take this choose a sponsor Squad and take +1 Status with them. If your vehicle was highly visible AND impressive during a Mission, take +1 Supply Point during the Reward process. If this gear is removed or Junked, take -2 Status with your sponsor, and you cannot gain the Reward benefit until the decals are replaced.
- **Boosted reactor** (1 use) [Load 1]: Spend for improved Effect when speed or agility is required. This refills at the start of each mission.
- **Overclocked Computer** (1 use) [load 1]: spend for improved position when under fire. This refills at the start of each mission.

EXAMPLE TUNER GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- What is standard in their vehicle?
- What is NOT standard in their vehicle?

- How have they underestimated my work?
- Who here would appreciate my work?
- Why are they threatened by my work?
- What industry event do I know them from?
- How can I get them to [X]?

EXAMPLE TUNER STARTING BELIEFS

- If they'd just let me mod their Vehicle, I'd get it purring.
- I don't trust their advice on machines. I'll show them the truth.
- They understand the joys of machines! I'm gonna learn what I can from them.
- I think they might be a narc. I'll keep an eye on them.

EXAMPLE TUNER ALLIES AND RIVALS

- O'Connor, a fresh racer
- Max, a wild driver
- Penny, a brilliant niece
- Dom, a strong patriarch

EXAMPLE TUNER STARTING BUILDS

- **Prima Donna**: Art By Another Name, +2 Consort, +1 Survey, +1 Command

- **Lead Foot**: Just. A Bit. More., +2 Struggle, +1 Maneuver, +1 Survey
- **Pit Chief**: Quick Swap Mounts, +2 Manipulate, +2 Command
- **Perfectionist**: On The Fly Adjustments, +2 Interface, +2 Study

INSERT SINGLE PAGE WIELDER PLAYBOOK ART HERE

The Myriad teaches that in the days of the 73rd Faith, Saint Hien, whose unit was pinned within a cave and vastly outnumbered by the enemy, emerged from the chthonic darkness after eight days. Above xir head, xe held the Apogeic Lance, and blessed by divine power xe used it to call down a swarm of micrometeorites upon the foe.

However, neither xe nor the Lance are mentioned prior to this story. So which is it? Does the weapon make the saint, or does the saint make the weapon?

Does the question matter to those on either side who bear witness to the storm?

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE WIELDER

An arm that holds The Weapon.

There are weapons and there are Weapons. The former are held by heroes and grunts alike, pushing conflicts along, hoping that victory is within arm's reach. The latter cut a clear path to that victory and those pushing and shoving see its gleam as a beacon that points to the end. When held by an ally it is hope incarnate, the dream that this will all be over soon. When held by an enemy it is dread, the nightmare that demands you break and tells you that you will die if the fool next to you breaks first. You are none of these because you are the one who is mostly forgotten in the legends. You are The Wielder, a historical footnote overshadowed by The Weapon you hold.

How did The Weapon come to be in your possession? How do you feel about its Drive?

A NOTE ABOUT THE WIELDER'S WEAPON

While the legendary item carried by The Wielder is called The Weapon, it does NOT have to be a weapon; some tools are used to harm people and cause destruction. Additionally, if it IS a weapon it does not have to be used in an attack to take advantage of its properties; sometimes a weapon's implications or secondary functions are useful on their own. To know whether or not The Weapon's bonuses apply to a situation, consider the established fiction of what it can do and what is currently happening.

The Weapon operates in a very specific category determined by its scale and range. If your Pilot is forced to operate outside of that category, they may feel vulnerable and weak especially if you expected them to be your squad's "muscle." This challenge is compounded by The Wielder's specialist gear being entirely focused on The Weapon; if you don't have a Vehicle scale Weapon, you effectively don't have Vehicle scale specialist gear.

The Weapon has a Drive of its own, but isn't necessarily sapient. It could be that it pursues its Drive in the same way that water pursues the bottom of a hill. If it IS sapient and communicative, it is recommended that the player control The Weapon's decisions (so that they generally align with what the Wielder's player wants to happen) and the GM role plays as The Weapon (so that the Wielder's player isn't talking to themself when their Pilot has a conversation with The Weapon). That said, the GM may also step in (whether as a course of the fiction or as a Consequence) and decide that The Weapon refuses to Activate because the Wielder is acting against its Drive.

CHOOSE THE WIELDER IF:

- You want to have abilities that intersect in interesting ways and leave a lot of room for narrative interpretation to make yourself look cool.
- Having an active relationship with The Weapon sounds fun.
-

WIELDER XP TRIGGERS

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with The Weapon's reputation or historical knowledge.

WIELDER STARTING ACTIONS

+1 Battle, +1 Struggle, +1 Study.

WIELDER ABILITIES

- **The Weapon**: **This is the only ability you get when creating the Wielder**. You have access to The Weapon. Describe its Look. It is Load 0. Decide on its scale and the Actions used with it (Pilot or Vehicle), and its range (within double arm's reach, within a scale appropriate stone's throw, or at a distance it is difficult to see a target of the same scale). When using The Weapon at the chosen scale and range, it Activates and provides +1d.
  The Weapon has Quirks as if it were a newly created Vehicle. These Quirks can be spent normally on any Actions or Resistances (Pilot or Vehicle) in which The Weapon is used. Your Vehicle does NOT have Quirks. If The Weapon spends all its Quirks it takes Breakdown like normal, but the Wielder's Vehicle remains active.
  The Weapon has 1 Drive clock (in addition to the Pilot's 2 Drive Clocks) and a Drive of its own. It will only spend its Drive Clock on things that align with its Drive and may refuse to Activate if the Wielder tries to use it for something that goes against The Weapon's Drive.
- **Hook**: Spend your Spark to make an obstacle or foe vulnerable with the same

benefits as a successful Set Up action. You can spend a Quirk to refresh your Spark.

- **Line**: When you push yourself, in addition to the normal benefits, gain +1d if you are taking advantage of a Set Up action.
- **Sinker**: It costs one fewer Drive Clock to permanently remove a Rival as a threat.
- **All In:** Gain a Connection Clock with The Weapon. Once per session you may add 1 tick each if you come into conflict with The Weapon's Drive, or if The Weapon helps you in an unexpected manner. When this Connection Clock fills, instead of gaining XP, The Weapon may gain a new Quirk (max 8)
- **Be Invoked:** When you hold The Weapon aloft for all to see and it Activates, make an Action roll using dice equal to the number of Ticks in The Weapon's Drive clock and spend that much Stress. On a 4-6, you may adjust a number of clocks equal to the Stress spent by an amount appropriate to your Effect. On a 1-5 suffer Consequences appropriate to your Position.
- **Versatile Weapon**: The Weapon gains a second range category.
- **Growing Weapon**: Spend 1 Stress to switch The Weapon between Pilot and Vehicle scales.
- **Veteran**: Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

WIELDER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **A significant outfit** [load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then load 2]: a uniform or costume that identifies you as a Wielder.
- **A Weapon retrieval tool** [load 1]: a drone, teleporter bracelet, or winding cord that allows you to return The Weapon to your grasp.
- **Specialized Nature** [load 1]: When The Weapon Activates it has increased Effect

against a specific type of target, but reduced Effect against all others.

- **Protective Nature** [load 1]: The Weapon counts as 1 Armor. Describe how it protects you.
- **Elemental Nature** [load 1]: choose an element (Periodic or Historical) and describe how The Weapon expresses it when it Activates.
- **A standard Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you by your superiors. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

WIELDER SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **A significant mark** [Load 0]: An emblem or style that identifies you as a Wielder.
- **A Weapon retrieval tool** [Load 1]: A drone, teleporter beacon, or winding cable that allows you to return The Weapon to your Vehicle.
- **A ReForge system** [Load 2]: Applies any declared Pilot scale Weapon Natures to the Vehicle scale Weapon.

EXAMPLE WIELDER GATHER INFORMATION QUESTIONS

- Who here knows The Weapon's history?
- Who else here has carried a Weapon?
- What does The Weapon remember of this place?
- How will they react when I reveal The Weapon?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- When was The Weapon last here?
- What here is useful to The Weapon?

EXAMPLE WIELDER STARTING BELIEFS

- They covet The Weapon and I wish I could give it to them.
- They covet The Weapon but they should never have it.
- The Weapon tells me they are useful.
- I cannot let The Weapon use them. They do not deserve that.

EXAMPLE WIELDER ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Arthur, a responsible leader
- Guile, an old soldier
- Cuhullin, a famous berserker
- Ivy, a vicious dilettante

EXAMPLE WIELDER STARTING BUILDS

- **Historian**: The Weapon, +1 Study, +2 Sway, +1 Consort
- **Designer**: The Weapon, +2 Engineer, +2 Survey
- **Disciple**: The Weapon, +1 Struggle, +1 Battle, +1 Study, +1 Command
- **Horror**: The Weapon, +2 Destroy, +2 Wreck

SQUAD PLAYBOOKS

INSERT DOUBLE PAGE SQUAD PLAYBOOKS ART HERE

I've killed a lot of people, Keiko, but I don't think anything haunts me more than the day I slipped out of that limousine and out of the Cenotaph. A squad is more than a family—some of us might say we're willing to fight for our families, but out on the battlefield you have to prove it to keep your squad going another day.

And off the field? You stick together. The late-night talks, the nugget runs, the days covered in oil and transmission fluid as you patch up your AWVs. With luck, you bond and get to watch each other grow. I watched you grow from an unsure farm kid into an admirable soldier and friend. Tower eventually found their footing, and Dredge… well I'd like to think co and I saw each other eye to eye.

But the war doesn't leave anyone unscathed. The soil we grow in is tainted, and sometimes the rot needs to be cut out. I'm sorry you had to find out it was me. The Myriad has hurt too many, and I hope—no I *pray* that its damage to you and the Cenotaph are minimal. It's the only thing this old priest still prays for.

Well, there's one other thing: I told you I hope one day you can forgive me. If we ever meet again, I pray you've forgiven me enough to make the end quick.

—Letter from Harrow Gray to Keiko Tuesday, unsent

INSERT SINGLE PAGE ACADEMY ART HERE (A class photo including a younger Harrow “Demon” Gray”, and the characters shown here (other than Harrow) will be used in the art for the other squad playbooks)

I was not an especially young man when the Celestial Myriad put me in officer training; I’d already been a priest for a few years. Most of the students were candidates in the prime of their youth, however, and they were a sight to behold. Smart uniforms and lectures and mock battles filled those days, and age has no bearing on one’s ability to be a tactician and command others.

I miss those kids. Eating chicken nuggets with Tower was the closest thing to those memories. If only they could have kept playing at war forever, instead of being thrust into the real thing.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE ACADEMY

The Next Generation

When you were enrolled in this Academy a great burden was placed on your shoulders: hope. Your teachers and parents hope that you can succeed where they failed. Your peers hope that you will support them. The opposition hopes that you're a waste of time. Some day you'll mirror these hopes, but for now, you just hope the next exam isn't too hard!

Are your Missions real or competitions against other students? How do you feel about that?

NOTES ON PLAYING THE ACADEMY

Most stories about students are about young people and as such require more specific consideration of Lines and Veils than most other squad playbooks. The Academy can be used for any age group of students, but remember that the characters will be put into danger. Make sure that every player at the table is comfortable not only with characters of the chosen age group likely being harmed, but also with the sources of danger that students often face in the real world (teachers, parents, bullies, etc).

Additionally, some of the NPC squads of Tier 3 or lower should be reimagined as being fellow students. How many and which squads depend on the tone of your game. A story that is more light-hearted with mock battles will have more student squads. A story about the horror of being child soldiers in real battles, may have only one student squad.

CHOOSE THE ACADEMY IF YOU WANT TO:

- Play students at a formal or semi-formal military academy.
- Struggle to balance the responsibilities of school with the dangers of battle.
- Be flexible in your skills.

ACADEMY XP TRIGGERS

Execute a successful battle or propaganda operation, or embody your Faction's precepts in action.

ACADEMY STARTING UPGRADES

- **Commissary:** You get +1d to Consort rolls on site. Some rationed items and friendly conversation can go a long way.
- **Quarters:** Your FOB has comfortable sleeping space for everyone. Otherwise the squad's pilots sleep away from the FOB in vulnerable locations.

ACADEMY ABILITIES

- **Classes: This is the only ability you get when creating the Squad.** When a pilot takes the Train downtime activity they gain access to a pilot playbook ability they do not currently have until the end of the next Mission. They may have only 1 temporary ability at a time.
- **Underdogs:** When you get 1-3 on a roll, you may use that to play up your inexperience. If you do, take +1d against anyone observing your mistake until you next roll a 6 or Crit.
- **Pop Quiz:** Before rolling Entanglements the squad can choose to have a Pop Quiz instead. If they do, roll 1d. 1-2 is Insight, 3-4 is Prowess, and 5-6 is Resolve. Every pilot that participated in the prior Mission must immediately make a Resist roll using that attribute as they are tested on its subjects.
- **Cram School:** As a 3 stress Flashback a pilot can detail how they studied hard and gain +1d in an Action of their choice until the end of the current Mission.
- **In This Together:** When a Pilot Resists a Consequence, the rest of the Squad can describe how they help. The Stress or Quirk cost of Resisting can be divided among any of the Pilots involved. If a Crit is rolled, only the initial Pilot recovers Stress.
- **Greater Expectations:** Take +1d (or spend 1 fewer quirks) when resisting or acting to maintain an ROE. Take 1 XP the first time each Mission when you intentionally break ROE. Gain 1 Trust with your Employer if all the ROEs are intact. Gain 1 rep if all ROEs are broken.
- **Graduation:** Only the Academy can take this ability. Every pilot permanently fills in

1 tick on a Drive clock, then the squad playbook is changed to a new one, keeping all the abilities you have earned.

ACADEMY UPGRADES

- Emergency AI: If a pilot gains a Scar during a Mission, they can continue to take vehicle actions so long as the actions directly work towards getting the pilot to safety.
- Elite Rovers: Rover Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rover-related actions.
- Elite Adepts: Adept Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for adept-related actions.
- Elite Toughs: Tough Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough-related actions.
- Friends Everywhere: Your squad's Tier and other squads' Tiers count as one lower for entanglements.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE CREW ART HERE (A Star Trek style Bridge Crew,, though not wearing star trek uniforms, is dealing with some kind of crisis. There are 5 people visible: 1 in foreground (at helm), 2 in midground (one in centre giving orders and one to the right likely partially offscreen), and 2 in background (one on left of person giving orders and is shouting information, and one on right whose back is to the camera).

When you met me at that bar in Journey City and asked me to join the Cenotaph, it was clear you had a vision. It was—it still *is*—a good one. I hope you don't lose sight of that in the aftermath of all that's happened. The dead deserve dignity, and the living deserve closure.

I wish I could give you more closure, but it's better if I'm gone. Take care of Keiko and Tower. I believe the three of you can do great things, and I'll do what I can to keep out of your way.

Maybe let them help you out in the Magpie sometimes.

—Letter from Harrow "Demon" Gray to Dredge, sent

THE CREW

Bound by a shared Cause.

A dream is built on the backs of many, but it is lead by a few. You are those few. Bound together by common cause and forged into the spear tip of hope.

CHOOSE THE CREW IF YOU WANT TO:

- Have a clear goal in mind.
- Share a single Vehicle.

CREW XP TRIGGERS

When you select The Crew as your Squad playbook, choose a Cause. This is the task that your Squad was assembled to complete, and should not be able to be completed in a single Mission. When you successfully progress your Cause, mark XP.

If the Cause is completed, each Pilot marks a Drive Tick. If you give up on it, or it becomes impossible for some reason, clear all of the XP in the Squad's XP track. In either case, pick a new Cause when the old one is resolved.

EXAMPLE CREW CAUSES

CAUSE	PROGRESS
Boldly go where no one has gone before!	• Explore strange new worlds. • Seek out new life. • Seek out new civilizations.
Reach the Green Place.	• Free the imprisoned. • Overthrow the oppressors. • Cross the wastes.
Recover the stolen prototype AWV.	• Remove the mole who aided the thieves. • Pursue the thieves. • Defeat the thieves' allies.
Defend the mobile town of Wander.	• Recruit additional defenders.

	• Train a militia. • Learn the plans of the attackers.
Guard the independence movement's leader until they can secure freedom.	• Scout the path to the negotiations. • Negotiate safe passage with pirates. • Foil assassination attempts.
Win the racing league's grand prix.	• Scout the competition's drivers. • Negotiate an endorsement deal. • Prevent the sabotage of your Vehicle.

CREW STARTING UPGRADES

- **Secure FOB:** Your FOB has perimeter defenses such as automated turrets, trip wire explosives, or a sturdy wall. This helps protect your Squad against attacks while at home. This can be taken twice, with the defenses becoming more effective with the second upgrade.
- **Motor Pool:** A first level Motor Pool means you pay half the Materiel cost (rounded up) when procuring new vehicles. At second level the Squad and its Cohorts gain access to Load 3 temporary vehicles for free.

CREW ABILITIES

- **Battlestations**!: **This is the only ability you get when creating the Squad**. Every Pilot is assigned one of the following roles: comms, scanners, mechanic, gunner, pilot, liaison. Take multiples of the same benefit when assisting in your role by spending 1 additional stress per repeat. Each Pilot's role has a Workstation which is a section of the Squad's Vehicle and replaces that Pilot's Vehicle.
- **Prime Directive**: When you break a Mission's ROE you can choose to make a Resolve Resistance Roll. If you do, erase that ROE for the rest of the Mission and don't lose Trust for breaking it.
- **Well Oiled Machine**: Every Pilot in the Squad is trained in a second **Battlestations!** role. They do NOT gain a second Workstation.
- **Crosstraining:** A Pilot can spend 2 stress to use an ability that another Pilot in the

Squad has, but must fulfill any requirements or costs associated with that ability.

- **Disk Separation:** a Pilot can choose to eject their Workstation from the Squad's Vehicle to become a self contained and propelled Vehicle with the same Load and Gear as the Workstation. Describe the Workstation's Look when it is separate from the Squad's Vehicle. Separated Workstations cannot use or benefit from **Battlestations!** This can also represent multiple Vehicles combining to create a much larger one.
- **Follow Through**: When you Push Yourself select a Pilot or Cohort. You Assist them at no additional cost as if you have 1 Connection with them, so long as their next action is against the same obstacle.
- **Redirect Power**: A Pilot can spend a Quirk to let another Pilot Push Themselves with their Workstation.

CREW UPGRADES

- Mobile Base: The Squad's FOB gains the mobility descriptor and can be moved to a new location as a Downtime activity.
- Friends Everywhere: Your Squad's Tier and other squads' Tiers count as one lower for Entanglements.
- Oversized Reactor: 1 free Load of any item for each Pilot's Vehicle.
- Elite Rovers: rover Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rover related actions.
- Reliable: Each Vehicle gets +1 Breakdown box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE DISMOUNTED ART HERE (A soldier in the foreground rushes to the right. In the midground a medic behind a crumbling, low wall is treating a wounded soldier. In the background a Balisong stumbles backwards as an explosion rocks its shield.)

Stepping out of an AWV on the battlefield is a terrible idea at the best of times, and I speak from experience. A roaring, stomping machine spitting bullets and firing energy at you is horrifying even when you're behind a layer of metal and ceramic armor. Never mind being on foot, trying to secure a fallen soldier's body while there is fighting around you.

But AWVs are expensive. Bodies are not. Despite mostly being hopeless fodder, now and then a handful of human-sized targets can slip unnoticed past the armed, lumbering towers of steel to seize an advantageous position. I've seen desperate, determined souls with a few rocket launchers turn the tide of a battle.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE DISMOUNTED

Forgotten Grunts

Whether it's due to logistics issues, an irate superior, or bad luck, your squad has been assigned as infantry. The moment that happened The War at large stopped caring about you. The massive machines that adorn posters are a world away from your experiences, except when they step on the poor bastard next to you. You're nothing but ants, but you'll remind everyone that doubts your efforts about what a bunch of insects can do.

How do you view those who pilot vehicles? What would you do to escape the infantry?

CHOOSE THE DISMOUNTED IF YOU WANT TO:

- Be your Faction's most expendable pawns.
- Be forced to rely on others for support.
- Tell the stories of forgotten combatants.

DISMOUNTED XP TRIGGERS

Execute a successful battle, sabotage, defense, or reconnaissance operation.

DISMOUNTED STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Prowess):** When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Prowess, take 2XP instead of 1. A space that allows you to steel yourself and focus your resolve.
- **Quarters:** Your FOB has comfortable sleeping space for everyone. Otherwise the squad's pilots sleep away from the FOB in vulnerable locations.

DISMOUNTED ABILITIES

- **Mud & Blood: This is the only ability you get when creating the Squad.** Members of this squad do not get a Vehicle, the "your custom vehicle" pilot gear, nor your pilot playbook's specialist vehicle gear. Cohorts also do not get vehicles. Each pilot may add +1 action rating to Prowl, Survey, or Wreck (up to a max rating of 3). Additionally, when a pilot Pushes Themself in a Desperate Position, the stress cost is reduced by 1 (min 1).

- **Bivouacking:** When there's time and opportunity during a Mission, the squad can set up camp allowing each pilot to take a single downtime activity. Materiel and Personnel cannot be spent for additional downtime activities. Additionally, Materiel can be changed to Personnel on a 1 for 1 rate, but changing Personnel to Materiel has a 3 to 1 rate.
- **Tank Marines:** When one of the squad is piloting a Temporary Vehicle, the vehicle's clock size increases by 1 step (for example a 4-tick clock becomes 6-ticks). When dismounting from a vehicle, gain improved effect on your next action.
- **Tunnel Rats:** When you take advantage of a space that you can barely fit into, take +1d against those you are leveraging the tight confines against.
- **Spotters:** Anyone in the squad can spend their Spark to call in an artillery barrage, air support, or transport. The benefits of the assistance last until the end of the current scene.
- **First To Land, Last To Leave:** When a group is trusting you to lead the way, take increased Effect. When a group is trusting you to guard their retreat, take improved Position.
- **Hardscrabble Heroes:** When the Squad completes a Mission it gains +2 Rep, +2 Trust with the Employer Faction, and all pilots take 1 general XP.

DISMOUNTED UPGRADES

- Ordinance Access: All squad members gain access to the pilot item "anti-armor weapon." Any pilot that has access to this item from another source, has a Fine version of this item instead. Anti-armor weapon [Load 2]: A heavy weapon designed to penetrate the kind of heavy armor found on many vehicles.
- Sapper Access: All squad members gain access to Fine Demolition Tools and Fine Placed Explosives. Any pilot that has access to this item from another source, reduces the item's Load by 1 (min 1).
- Elite Skulks: Skulk Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for skulk-related actions.

- Elite Toughs: Tough Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough-related actions.
- Composed: Each pilot gets +1 Stress box. This costs three squad upgrades to unlock.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE DOUBLE AGENTS ART HERE (The exact same scene as The Crew art but from a different angle that shows that the 2 partially off screen figures are in fact traitors. They have drawn out small concealed firearms, possibly pistols or mini SMGs, and are about to attack the rest of the bridge crew)

“Why?”

I know that’s the question that fills the void in my absence, Keiko. What possessed Harrow Gray to turn his back on the Cenotaph—on you—and throw in with the Hyenas?

The truth is, I’d been with them for a long time in order to strike back at the Myriad. I don’t expect you to understand. May you never have to. May you never be driven to betray those around you because nothing can ever stop the collapsing star that exists where your heart once was.

Why’d I do it? Because it was about revenge. You were just collateral.

All of us are, in the end.

—Letter from Harrow Gray to Keiko Tuesday, unsent

THE DOUBLE AGENTS

Two Faced Bastards

There are only two reasons to be doing this: you're a patriot, or you don't have a choice. There's no money here, and certainly no glory. If everything goes well, no one will know about your actions until after you've died of old age. If everything goes well, you'll have stabbed everyone you know in the back, and will never see them again. If everything goes well…

What's your reason for doing this? How much sympathy do you feel for the false life you created?

CHOOSE THE DOUBLE AGENTS IF YOU WANT TO:

-

DOUBLE AGENTS XP TRIGGERS

Secretly weaken your False Patron or secretly strengthen your True Patron.

DOUBLE AGENTS STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Resolve):** When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Resolve, take 2XP instead of 1. A space that allows you to steel yourself and focus your resolve.
- **Hidden FOB:** The squad's FOB is hidden from even intensive searches. If it's discovered, a Long Term Project will be required to once again conceal it.

DOUBLE AGENTS ABILITIES

- **Deep Cover: This is the only ability you get when creating the Squad**. You have a False Patron and a True Patron. When adjusting Faction Trust at the end of a Mission, halve Trust lost (rounding down) by the Target if they are your True Patron. Otherwise only adjust your True Patron's Trust at the end of a Mission if they are your Employer.
- **Shibboleth**: After a successful Consort Action roll (not gather information) with a target, you may ask "who are they loyal to?", and "who do they distrust?"

- **Flexible Morals**: When assisting another pilot you can choose to count as having one fewer Connection with them. When you are not the leader in a Group action you can choose to back out of the action after seeing the result. If you do back out, you do not gain the benefits nor suffer the Consequences of the Group Action.
- **Analysts**: During downtime each Pilot may add 1 tick to a Long Term Project Clock that involves investigation.
- **Stick Your Neck Out**: When making a supply roll any pilot can spend 2 stress for +1d to the roll.
- **A Different Perspective:** When you have a +3 Status with a Squad it costs 1 Drive to change the circumstances of a person in that Squad, and 2 Drive to change the Squad's circumstances.
- **One Last Job:** You can choose to Push Yourself or accept a Collateral Die on resistance rolls. Also you can accept a Collateral Die to reduce the Quirk cost of Vehicle resistance by 1.

DOUBLE AGENTS UPGRADES

- Double Agents Rigging: Each pilot gets one item that is concealed, and 1 free load of weapons.
- Friends Everywhere: Your Squad's Tier and other Squads' Tiers count as one lower for Entanglements.
- Elite Skulks: Skulk Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for skulk-related actions.
- Elite Rooks: Rook Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rook-related actions.
- Hardened: Each pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three squad upgrades to unlock.

INSERT SINGLE PAGE HUNTED ART HERE (Something Ominous looming behind a small group of scared looking Pilots)

You remember that DFS squad who helped us out a while back, the Azure Hawks? My sources tell me they've drawn the attention of Eritus Rau, one of Exodus's "Liquidation Specialists".

I hope they have somewhere to go to ground, because that man is a force of nature. If they come knocking on our door we'd be wise to turn them away—Rau doesn't care about collateral. I've seen wanted posters for him in *Journey City*, and you know they usually try and stay out of that sort of thing.

The poor bastards. They'll need a lot of sense, and a lot more luck.

—Message from Harrow "Demon" Gray to Julia "Ripper" Faraday

THE HUNTED

On The Run

You pissed off someone or something real bad. It's coming. You know it in your bones and the bones of every corpse it's left in its wake. It won't stop until you and yours are dead and gone. Unless you kill IT first. Maybe with a bit of sacrifice, grit, and luck you'll be able to turn the Hunter into the Hunted.

Why is The Hunter chasing you? Why can't you escape The Hunter?

A NOTE ON PLAYING THE HUNTED

The Hunter will be the Rival shared by every member of the Squad. This will turn them into a terrifying force with a lot of Rival Moves at their disposal and a very large challenge clock to remove them as a threat. Be sure to refresh yourself on the rules for Rivals and particularly those for having a Rival shared by multiple Pilots.

CHOOSE THE HUNTED IF YOU WANT TO:

- Have a powerful foe in constant pursuit of you.
- Sacrifice for every advantage you get.
- Feel immense triumph when you finally defeat your Rival.

HUNTED XP TRIGGERS

Execute a successful battle, delivery, or reconnaissance operation, or defeat or escape The Hunter.

HUNTED STARTING UPGRADES

- **Hidden FOB:** The squad's FOB is hidden from even intensive searches. If it's discovered, a Long Term Project will be required to once again conceal it. **OR Mobile Base:** The squad's FOB gains the mobility descriptor and can be moved to a new location as a Downtime activity.
- **Toughs Cohort:** Gain a fire team of warriors, bouncers, killers, etc. that works for the squad. They have Quality and scale equal to the squad's Tier.

HUNTED ABILITIES

- **The Hunter: This is the only ability you get when creating the Squad.** Detail The Hunter's motives, methods, and appearance. They may be an individual or a

group, and are Tier 4S. Every Pilot has them as their Rival and may have no other Rival. Permanently removing The Hunter as a threat costs 4 Drive Clocks. The Squad has an 8-Tick clock labelled “Arrival.” Pilots can add 1 Tick to this clock to Push Themselves, and Ticks may be added as Consequences, but Rival moves can NOT add Ticks. Ticks can NOT be added to the Arrival clock while the Rival is present as a danger. The clock only resets after it is filled. When the Clock fills, The Hunter enters the current scene (even during Downtime) as a danger.

- **I’ll Buy You Time:** When a Cohort acts alone against The Hunter, you may inflict Level 2 Harm on them after they roll. If you do, they get +1d to their roll, and the next roll against The Hunter has improved position and increased effect.
- **Not My Problem:** You may choose to worsen your Relationship with your Patron Faction or Employer Faction by 1 to remove The Hunter from the scene. They will only return once the Arrival clock has been filled again.
- **Hunter’s Code:** The Hunter has a category of person that they refuse to hurt; detail that group. When you take someone of that category hostage and use them as a shield, you have Controlled position until you directly act against The Hunter or the hostage.
- **Strictly Business:** If you encounter The Hunter outside of a mission, they will be non-combative, if not cordial. If you attack them at this moment, the Arrival clock instantly fills after the next Engagement roll.
- **Jumping At Shadows:** Every pilot gains the “Paranoid” Scar. Before rolling to Resist or spending quirks to Resist, a Pilot may add 2 Ticks to the Arrival clock to negate a Consequence.
- **Time’s Running Out:** If the Arrival Clock has 0-2 Ticks, take improved position (except against The Hunter). If the Arrival Clock has 3 or more Ticks, take increased effect. If the Arrival clock has 5 or more Ticks, take +1d. When the Arrival Clock fills, every Pilot takes Level 1 Harm “Scared.”

HUNTED UPGRADES

- Escape Rigging: Each Pilot gets two free load of mobility items.
- Escape Hardpoints: Each Vehicle gets two free load of mobility items.
- Camouflage: The squad's vehicles are perfectly concealed when at rest. They blend in as part of the environment, or as an uninteresting civilian vehicle (your choice). Changing the camouflage can be done for free at the start of a mission.
- Elite Toughs: Tough Cohorts belonging to your squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough-related actions.
- Hardened: Each pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three squad upgrades to unlock.

EXPANDED FACTION AND SQUAD RULES

INSERT DOUBLE PAGE FACTION AND SQUAD ART HERE

Nobody's *actually* happy with the way things are. Not the civilians, not the soldiers, and certainly not the brass, or else they wouldn't keep feeding people into the grinder to secure a few more meters of dirt.

The Hyenas operate under the auspice of Empress Cascade the Fourth, an infant with no power in whose name an assortment of rotten bastards enforce their own wills. I don't think a single member of the squad has any illusions that we are truly loyal to the Empire. I've never even seen Jovangel. It's just a place that sends the orders.

This is to say nothing of all the backroom deals between squads that are struck regardless of political affiliation or boundary. So why do we keep up the pretense? Why do we keep taking marching orders from assholes in suits who don't have to worry about where the laser that's going to cut them in half comes from?

Maybe I should have stayed with the Cenotaph, tried to make it work. I could have been honest, told them what the Faith had done, allied more closely with Julia and the Hyenas… and then what? Arranged a dinner with Lady Elreth and forged an alliance against the Myriad and the Empire under our own doomed flag?

Look at you, Harrow, still dreaming. We'd all have been dead once Castle Kim got the first whiff of sedition, and that bastard had me all figured out. Demon.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

BECOMING A DIRECT SUPERIOR

Sometimes Pilots REALLY don't get along with their Direct Superior and get rid of them in some way. For those players looking to take over the responsibilities of their ex-commander, there are mechanics for how that affects play! One Pilot will need to step up as the new Direct Superior who will handle the logistics of running a Squad in the form of a new downtime activity.

ADMINISTRATE: Only a squad's Direct Superior can perform this downtime activity. The Direct Superior chooses a Pilot to join them as they spend time filling requisition, allotment, and organization forms in the quiet moments between Missions. Both players get to add a Connection Clock tick for each other but do NOT remove any stress.

Additionally, the Direct Superior may choose one of the following benefits:

- The Squad gets +1d on their next Supply Roll.
- One Pilot gets +1d on all Fix downtime activities they take this downtime.

BEFORE YOU TAKE COMMAND OF A FACTION...

Know that the rules that follow WILL complicate play and require time to use. Taking part in managing a Faction doesn't replace any existing rules, and in fact adds its own phase of play. Some of the time and energy required to use these rules will fall to the GM and some of it will fall to the Players. Make sure that everyone at the table is interested in exploring this style of play, or consider if there is a way for part of your group to use these rules without the others feeling left out. Work together to make sure that everyone is having a good time.

FORMING A FACTION

When having a Squad at your command doesn't give you enough power to make the changes you want, it might be time to look at reaching higher and forming a Faction. Doing that won't be easy; it'll require a lot of time, effort, and resources. After all, nations aren't built in a day. Here are the steps for forming a Faction:

1. Find squads who would be interested in joining your Faction. This can be done as a single Long Term Project, a series of them, occur on screen during a Mission or Downtime phase, a natural extension of the Pilots' status with that squad, or a combination of the above.

2. The sum of the interested squads' tier (including the Players' Squad) must equal 10 or higher. Whether that tier has Weak or Strong hold doesn't affect this.
3. 20 Personnel and 20 Materiel must be spent by the Pilots. This amount can be modified with appropriate Missions or Long Term Projects, such as getting another squad to cover some of the costs (likely in exchange for some concessions during the negotiations in step 4). This represents the Pilots' initial investment in the Faction so that it has the resources it needs to operate. In the narrative, the other squads forming the Faction will also be contributing supplies.
4. Officially found the Faction with a Long Term Project or Mission that focuses on the negotiations between the interested squads. Each member squad will want a concession proportional to their tier, and those with similar goals may align their demands for a concession larger than they could get alone.

   During these negotiations the type of Faction being formed will be decided by the squads involved. Different squads will prefer different types of Faction, and the Players (including the GM) should discuss what they think each squad will want. Here are the differences between the Faction types:

   - An **Autocracy** has a single leader, the Autocrat, who makes all decisions, and is chosen as part of the Faction forming negotiations.
   - A **Corporatocracy** allows its member squads to bid on the Mission assignments of other squads.
   - A **Democracy** makes decisions by having every squad vote on a course of action.
   - An **Oligarchy's** leadership is composed of its 3 most powerful squads.
   - A **Theocracy** is lead by the most pious squad, known as the Conclave.
5. Name the newly formed Faction and set it as the Pilots' Patron. Choose its Faction Goal.

   If you are not part of your Faction's leadership, then you don't need to worry about the Faction management rules. This is likely to happen if you choose an Autocracy, Oligarchy, or Theocracy.

SPENDING DRIVE

By the time the pilots are in the position to form a Faction they will probably have a few filled Drive Clocks they can use to help them. As with spending Drive under normal circumstances, the results of the expenditure should be a discussion between the players and the GM. Here are a few suggestions for ways that spending Drive could affect the formation of a Faction.

Spending 2 Drive Clocks	Spending 3 Drive Clocks	Spending 4 Drive Clocks
● Choose the person who will become your new Autocracy's Autocrat.	● Convince a squad to join your nascent Faction.	● Choose your new Faction's type and Leadership regardless of the wishes of the other squads.
● Convince an NPC to join your nascent Faction.	● Have a squad cover part of your Supply Point investment.	● Bypass the initial Supply Point investment.

FACTION MANAGEMENT

Factions are massive organizations that frequently stretch beyond the gravity of a single planet. It takes a huge amount of resources, staff, and ambition to make one run smoothly. This section will describe the various ways that administering a Faction differs from a Squad.

MAKING DECISIONS

Each type of Faction makes its decisions using methods that are different from the others. The proponents of them will claim that theirs is the best way to run a government, while their opponents will decry them as inefficient, immoral, and foolish. How each type of leadership works follows.

AUTOCRACY

An autocracy puts control of the Faction into the hands of a single person.

The Faction's leadership is a single individual, called the Autocrat. During Faction creation the first Autocrat is selected through whatever means the founders like, and getting to choose them is often a concession that high Tier squads will seek. The Autocrat does not need to be a member of the highest Tier squad, however if the Autocrat dies, the highest tier squad chooses the new Autocrat. If

the Assassination Entanglement is rolled, it always targets the Autocrat.

When assigning squads to Missions the Autocrat chooses the Mission and Target for each squad. If the assigned Mission directly supports the squad's Goal, their Status increases by 1. If the assigned Mission directly opposes the squad's Goal, their Status decreases by 1.

CORPORATOCRACY

A corporatocracy measures value and power through economic might. It expresses this in its leadership by allowing any member to bid valuables to direct other squads.

When assigning squads to Missions, a squad may bid Resources to assign another squad to a Mission and Target of their choosing. NPC squads can bid up their Tier. If two squads bid for the same assignment, the squad that bid more wins. If a squad is left unassigned, it will pursue its Goal if it has Strong hold, or Recuperate if Weak.

DEMOCRACY

A democracy seeks to give as many different voices as possible a say in what happens.

When assigning squads to Missions a vote is held to determine what Missions each squad will be assigned. Each squad in the Faction gets a number of votes equal to its Tier. Each squad can divide their votes however they want between a strategy and/or specific Missions. All votes are cast at the same time, and each squad must reveal what they voted for simultaneously.

Voting for a strategy is picking a Mission Type, and all squads not assigned to a specific Mission must choose this Mission Type. The Mission Type with the most votes wins. If there is a tie for most strategy votes, the squads are split between the winning Mission Types. Regardless the squads select the Target for the Missions.

Votes for specific assignments choose a squad to assign. The squad that has allotted the most votes to that squad gets to choose a Mission Type and a Target (if applicable) for them. If tied, the squad reverts to the strategy.

Pilots can use the Lobby Downtime Activity to get a squad's votes to align with their desires.

LOBBY

When you spend time working to convince a squad to vote in alignment with you, decide how many of their allotted votes you want. The squad lobbied will want something in return that supports their Goal and that is proportional to the number of votes provided. This may be giving them a Resource point, a few Supply points, voting to assign a specific squad to a specific Mission, something

more personal, etc. If you agree to pay the cost, for the next voting period they lose that many votes, and you gain that many. If you agree to pay the cost but do not fulfill it, the squad you lobbied has their Status with your squad decrease by 1, AND their Status with your shared Patron decreases by 1. You can spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Lobby activity.

OLIGARCHY

An oligarchy makes decisions using methods similar to a democracy, the difference is that an oligarchy denies anything resembling universal suffrage.

The three highest tier squads in the Faction each get a number of votes equal to their tier. These squads can spend their votes on a strategy or on specific Missions. All votes are cast at the same time, and each squad must reveal what they voted for simultaneously.

Voting for a strategy is picking a Mission Type, and all squads not assigned to a specific Mission must choose this Mission Type. The Mission Type with the most votes wins. If there is a tie for most strategy votes, the squads are split between the winning Mission Types. Regardless the squads select the Target for the Missions.

Votes for specific assignments choose a squad to assign. The squad that has allotted the most votes to that squad gets to choose a Mission Type and a Target (if applicable) for them. If tied, the squad reverts to the strategy.

Pilots can use the Lobby Downtime Activity to get a squad's votes to align with their desires.

THEOCRACY

A theocracy chooses its leadership by finding the squad that is most zealous in pursuit of the Faction's goals.

The chosen squad is known as the Conclave, and during Faction creation the first Conclave is selected through whatever means the founders like. Getting to choose them is often a concession that high Tier squads will seek. As being the Conclave puts the squad under close scrutiny, many squads will push for someone else to become the Conclave. If the Assassination Entanglement is rolled, it always targets the Conclave.

When assigning squads to Missions the Conclave chooses the Mission and Target for each squad (including itself). If the assigned Mission directly supports the Conclave's Goal, their Status increases by 1. If a non-Conclave squad reaches Accord with the Faction, it becomes the new Conclave.

When a new Conclave is created, the old Conclave becomes just a normal squad and has its

Status (if positive) set to zero. All non-Conclave squads with a positive Status have their Status set to +1. Non-Conclave squads with a Status of zero or lower do not have any changes made to their Status.

RESOURCE POINTS

Factions operate on a logistical level above squads and so they don't deal in Supply Points. Instead they gather and hand out Resource Points. Resource Points cover the same kinds of rations, ammunition, vehicle parts, and so forth that are covered by Supply Points, but at an incredible scale that necessitates abstraction. When a Faction gives a squad Resource Points it isn't so much giving X number of crates of Materiel as it is marking the movement of theoretical supplies in a logbook. For this reason it is not possible to directly convert Resource Points into Supply Points, or vice versa.

MANAGING SQUADS

If you are part of a Faction's leadership you will need to manage the squads that are part of it. This includes paying them, regulating their Status, overseeing their development, and assigning them to Missions.

SQUAD TYPES

Every squad belonging to the Faction you manage has a specialty. If at least one squad is assigned to a Mission that is outside of their specialty, they will reduce the Mission Roll by -1d (see page 98), so it's important to keep each squad's skills in mind. When you begin managing a Faction's squads assign each of them a specialty from the following:

- Socializing
- Espionage
- Infantry combat
- Transporting
- Vehicle combat
- Financing
- Infiltration
- Research
- Assassination

SQUAD STATUS

Part of administering a Faction is managing the relationship it has with squads, whether friend or foe. In addition to the squad status sheet the Players will have for tracking how other squads feel about theirs, they will now also need to track how other squads feel about their Patron. Regardless of who a squad's Patron is, they all start at 0 Status with the Faction the Players manage.

A squad's Status with the Faction increases by 1 when:

- the squad's Development Clock is filled and they go up a Tier.
- the squad's Recuperate Clock is filled and they move from Weak Hold to Strong Hold.
- they are assigned a Mission that directly furthers their Goal (Autocracy only).

A squad's Status with the Faction decreases by 1 when:

- their Tier decreases.
- their Commander is removed from the squad.
- they are not paid during the Faction Phase.
- they are affected by a Faction Entanglement that lowers their Status.
- they are targeted by a Mission assigned by the Faction.
- they are assigned a Mission that directly opposes their Goal (Autocracy only).

If a squad reaches -3 Status with the Faction, whether that Faction is their Patron or not, they have a Vendetta against it. Each squad with a Vendetta against the Faction provides +1d to the Faction Entanglement roll as they interfere with the Faction however they are able. This can be negated if another squad that was assigned to Attack them had their Mission resolved this Faction Phase (regardless of the Mission's degree of success).

If a squad with the Faction as their Patron would reach -4 Status, it has had enough mistreatment from the Faction. Whether this mistreatment was real or imagined that squad changes its Patron, either gaining a new one or becoming Independent. If the squad was a Region's Guardian, that Region remains under their control as they bring it with them to their new Patron or become its Independent rulers.

If a squad reaches +3 Status with their Patron Faction, they have reached Accord with it. The squad believes that its Patron's goals align with their own, and so they fight harder to support their Patron. A squad with Accord counts as half of its normal Tier (rounded down) for the purpose of paying them during the Faction Phase. Furthermore, if at least one Squad with Accord is assigned to a Mission, they provide +1d to the Mission Roll when resolving it.

Squad Status also indicates the relationship that Factions (their leadership, citizens, and zeitgeist) have with each other. A set of mostly positive Statuses mean that an alliance, or at least pact of neutrality, between those Factions is possible. Mostly negative Statuses show that an escalation or refocusing of the conflict between the two Factions is likely to occur. For example, if most Jovangellian squads have a negative Status with the Adamant Council of Nor, then Norrish people will likely face prejudice from Jovangellians and see propaganda denouncing their culture.

SQUAD TIER AND HOLD

When managing squads there are 5 important differences for how they work compared to when you aren't managing squads.

- If a squad is the highest Tier squad assigned to a Mission, that Mission Roll will use its Tier when it is being resolved.
- After resolving Missions during the Faction Phase every squad must be paid Resources equal to their Tier (unless they are in Accord with the Faction, then the amount is halved, rounding down).
- You can lower a squad's Tier instead of paying them, and gain Resources equal to half their new Tier (rounded up). As always, when a squad loses a Tier their Status with the Faction goes down by 1.
- Squads have a 6-Tick Development clock and a 4-Tick Recuperate Clock. If the former is filled by assigning a Squad to the Development Mission, their Tier increases by 1 and they get +1 Status.
- Squads have a 4-Tick Recuperate Clock. If it is filled by assigning a squad to the Recuperate Mission, it resets to zero, they change their Hold from Weak to Strong, and get +1 Status. If a squad loses Tier or Hold all Ticks in its Recuperate Clock are removed.

SQUAD COMMANDER

Each squad has a Commander who represents the squad. They are an NPC who should represent the squad in scenes where it needs a voice. While the GM has the final say on who the Commander is, the Players should give their input on who they want to frequently interact with. The Commander doesn't actually need to be the squad's commanding officer, but they are the person that the rest of the squad relies on and looks to for direction. If the Commander is removed from the squad by their death or betrayal (or something equally dramatic), the squad's Status with their Patron decreases by 1 and they lose a hold. This happens as everyone loses some of their confidence with the removal of their leader. A new Commander is then selected.

CONTROLLING REGIONS

For a Faction to increase the amount of Resources it has it must control additional Regions. To do that all squads with Patrons other than your own must be removed from the Region. This can be

done with one or more appropriate Long Term Projects, or with one or more appropriate Missions. Independent squads do not need to be removed, but if they are hostile to your Patron they might become a thorn in your side going forward.

Once the Region is clear of overt influence from other Factions, a squad must be assigned as that Region's Guardian. The Guardian is responsible for enforcing the Patron's control of the Region; how they do this will depend on the type of squad assigned to be Guardian. For example, combat squads will fight against destabilizing forces, financial squads will use bribery and graft, and espionage squads will dig up blackmail to leverage against dissidents.

There are five benefits for controlling a Region:

- Each Region controlled by your Patron provides Resources equal to half its Wealth rating (rounded down), as some of its valuables are directed towards The War effort.
- If your Patron rapidly strips a Region of its valuables, lower the Region's Wealth rating by 1 and roll 1d. Gain Resources equal to the die result.
- If one of your Patron's squads would lose Hold, a Region's Might can be reduced by 1 to prevent that loss as your Faction redirects the combatants and weapons inside the Region to replenish the squad's losses.
- If your Patron quickly absorbs a Region's advanced technology, engineers, and scientists into a squad, lower that Region's Tech rating by 1 and roll 1d. Add Ticks to one squad's Development Clock equal to the die result.
- If your Patron empowers the organizations that work outside of its control, increase a Region's Crime rating by 1. This allows you to choose which Entanglement occurs during the next Faction Phase. If a Region's Crime rating increases to 2 or 4, decrease its Wealth rating by 1 as valuables that would go to the Patron are redirected to the organizations it has no control over. If a Region's Crime rating would increase to 5, it instead becomes Independent, is no longer under the Faction's control, a Tier 4 Independent squad becomes its Guardian, and the squad that was previously its Guardian loses 1 Tier.

THE FACTION PHASE

Once you become part of a Faction's leadership, the Faction Phase gets added to the cycle of play. It takes place between Missions, and the Downtime Phase is nested within it. See the steps below.

1. Resolve active squad Missions
2. Gain Regional income (equal to half [rounded down] of the sum of your controlled regions' Wealth)
3. Pay Squads: Each squad gets paid an amount of Resource points equal to their Tier (including the Players' Squad if they want a Supply roll from the Faction). If a squad is NOT paid the full amount they are owed, they take -1 Status with the Faction.
4. Adjust Squad Status
5. Faction Entanglements
6. Downtime Phase
7. Leadership decides the Faction's course of action, which will be expressed by assigning squads to missions.
8. Assign new Squad Missions

RESOLVING MISSIONS

To see how well a Mission went for a squad either the GM or the Players will make a Mission Roll for the squad during the Mission resolution step of the Faction Phase. To make a Mission Roll use dice equal to the squad's Tier. If more than one squad is assigned to the Mission, use the squad with the highest Tier. Take +1d for each of the following:

- More than 1 squad was assigned to the Mission;
- The Faction provides intel or specialized equipment for the Mission by spending 1 Resource. This is spent now during Mission resolution for simplicity.
- All assigned squads have a positive relationship with the Faction.
- At least one assigned squad has reached Accord with the Faction.

Take -1d for each of the following:

- The Mission is outside of at least one of the assigned squads' specialties.
- An assigned squad has Weak Hold.
- The Target is a higher Tier than all assigned squads.
- An assigned squad has a negative relationship with the Faction.

Mission Results:

- **1-3:** The Mission fails and all assigned squads lose Hold.
- **4/5:** The Mission fails but the assigned squads are unharmed, or the Mission succeeds but the assigned squads lose Hold. Choose if they have a safe retreat or a Pyrrhic victory.
- **6:** The Mission succeeds.
- **Crit:** The Mission succeeds and the assigned squads add 1 Tick to their Development Clock.

FACTION ENTANGLEMENTS

Entanglements for the faction level. If the most recently resolved assigned Missions lowered an enemy squad's Status, roll on The War Rages table. Otherwise roll on the All Is Quiet table. In either case roll dice equal to the highest Crime rating in a Region controlled by your Faction, and take the highest die result. If you would roll zero dice, roll 2 and take the lowest.

THE WAR RAGES TABLE

1. **Exhaustion**: Your highest tier squad has been stretching themselves thin, trying to be everywhere at once. It immediately loses 1 Hold.
2. **Missing Resources**: One of your Squads is withholding Resource Points they've collected on your behalf. Lose 2 Resource points, or demand the squad hand over the goods and make a Fortune roll with dice equal to the squad's Status with the Faction (1-3: -2 Status with the Squad, 4/5: -1 Status instead, 6: no Status lost) to see how they take it.
3. **Revolt**: A group of armed civilians mob your lowest tier squad with demands. Give them 2 Resources, or make a Fortune Roll using the squad's Tier (1-3: The squad loses Hold, 4/5: Increase the Region's Crime rating by 1, 6: no change) to see how things shake out.
4. **Raid:** An enemy squad you have a negative Status with steals from a Region you control. Assign the Region's Guardian to an Attack Mission with the Raiders as the Target, or roll the Region's Wealth rating and lose Resources equal to the highest die result.

5. **BATTLE!**: An enemy squad you have a negative Status with strikes one of your squads that is the same tier or lower. The assault comes suddenly and with little warning; prepare to fight OR scatter and return after the attackers have done their damage. If you prepare to fight, the squad being attacked must be assigned the Attack Mission next. If you scatter, lose Resources equal to the attackers' Tier as they destroy your squad's stockpiled Resources.
6. **Assassination:** An enemy squad you have a negative Status with makes a precise attack against the Commander of your lowest Tier Squad. Make a Fortune Roll using that Squad's Tier. 1-3: the Commander is killed and the normal fallout occurs; 4/5: the Commander is injured causing the Squad to lose Hold; 6: the assassins are captured giving you 1 Resource).

ALL IS QUIET TABLE

1. **Requisition Permit**: One of your squads requisitions a facility from another squad. If you permit the requisition, the claimants get +1d on their next mission, and the givers get -1d on their next mission and lose 1 Status. You can compensate the givers by spending 1 Resource to negate the lost Status. If you deny the requisition, the claimants get -1 Status.
2. **Desperate Civilians**: A group of civilians riot due to perceived military corruption. Choose one of the following:
   - Spend 1 Resource to appease the civilians.
   - Assign 1 squad to quell the unrest as an Attack Mission with the civilians as the Target (counts as a Tier 0 squad). Don't roll to see if the Target takes damage, the civilians are dispersed regardless of the Mission's success.
   - Let it run its course (A Region your Faction controls loses 1 Wealth to a minimum of 0).
3. **Conspiring Commander**: One of your squads is acting suspicious. The Commander can be taken in to be grilled. Make a Fortune Roll using the Squad's Tier to see how well they resist the pressure (1-3: Lose Status and Hold; 4/5: Lose

Status, gain 1 Resource; 6: gain 1 Resource) or leave them be and lose 1 Resource.
4. **Manufacturing Flaw**: Scuttlebutt is that some of the gear you've issued is unhealthy to be around. Choose to spend 1 Resource for +1d to every squad or don't, but either way make a Fortune Roll using each squad's Tier (1-3: The squad loses Hold, 4/5: Spend 1 Resource to fix the squad's gear or lose Hold, 6: It's not toxic).
5. **Armchair Generals**: Your faction's highest tier squad makes demands of the Faction. If you deny the demands, the squad loses 3 Status. If you give in to the demands, roll 1d to determine the mission type that ALL squads must be assigned to for their next Mission (1: attack, 2: bankroll, 3: develop, 4: investigate, 5: liaise, 6: recuperate). When possible, multiple squads can be assigned to the same Mission if desired.
6. **Treason**: A rival Faction is courting your squad with the lowest Status. Roll that Squad's Tier; 1-3: lower their Status by 3; 4/5: Lower their Status by 2; 6: Lower their Status by 1; Crit: their status is unchanged. If their Status would reach -4, they switch sides and become loyal to the rival Faction now, and if they were a Guardian their Region switches Factions too.

ASSIGNING SQUADS TO MISSIONS

If you have the authority to assign squads to Missions during the Faction Phase, choose one of the following Mission Types for each squad.

- **Attack:** The squad attacks a target to damage it. When selecting this Mission type choose a squad to attack; this is the Mission's Target. When resolving the Mission, roll the sum of the assigned squads' Tier with -1d if the Mission failed. On a 1-3 nothing happens as the squad wasn't able to inflict significant damage on the Target. On 4/5 the Target loses Hold. On 6 the Target loses 1 Tier. On a crit the Target loses 1 Hold AND 1 Tier. Regardless of the Mission's outcome The Faction's Status with the Target goes down by 1.
- **Bankroll:** The squad works to raise Resource Points for the Faction. When selecting this Mission type choose a Region for the squad to gather supplies from. The squad that has the

most authority in that Region is the Target. The assigned squad(s) beg, barter, and steal to get what the Faction needs. If the Mission succeeds, roll dice equal to the Region's Wealth Rating, and the Faction gain's Resource Points equal to the highest die. If a crit is rolled, gain 9 Resource Points. Take +1d for each squad beyond the first that was assigned to this Mission. Regardless of the Mission's outcome The Faction's Status with the Target goes down by 1.

- **Develop:** The squad works on improving themselves; upgrading their vehicles and training their members. Add 1 Tick to the squad's 6 Tick Development Clock. The Faction can spend 2 Resource Points to add an additional Tick. If the Development Clock fills, the squad increases its Tier by 1, and gets +1 Status with the Faction.
- **Investigate:** The squad works to increase the knowledge available to the Faction. When selecting this Mission type, choose an active Long-Term Project or create a new one. The squad that has the most information regarding the Long-Term Project is the Target. If the Mission succeeds, roll dice equal to the sum of the assigned squads' Tier, and add Ticks equal to the result to the chosen Long-Term Project. If a crit is rolled, add 9 Ticks. Regardless of the Mission's outcome The Faction's Status with the Target goes down by 1.
- **Liaise:** The squad works to improve relations with another faction (and spy on them while they're at it). When selecting this Mission type, choose a squad to liaise with; that squad is the Target. If the Mission succeeds, roll dice equal to the sum of the assigned squads' Tier. On a 1-3 choose 1, on 4/5 choose 2, on 6 choose 3, and on crit choose 4: +1 to the Target's status with the Faction, or add 1 Tick to a Long-Term Project. Options can be selected multiple times.
- **Recuperate:** The squad in question spends time repairing their vehicles, letting their wounded heal, and recruiting to refill their ranks. Add 1 Tick to the squad's 4 Tick Recuperate Clock. When that Clock fills, it resets to zero and then if the squad has Weak hold, they move to Strong and get +1 Status. The Faction can spend 1 Resource Point to add an additional Tick. If a squad loses Tier or Hold all Ticks in its Recuperate Clock are removed.

HIRING MERCENARIES

A Faction's Leadership can hire a squad outside of their Faction, whether belonging to another Faction or Independent, to be assigned to a Mission. The Leadership will have to pay the hired squad an amount of Resource points equal to their Tier during the Pay Squads step of the Faction phase. This can be useful for filling in for squads that:

- have a negative relationship with your Faction.
- are busy Recuperating or have reduced Hold.
- don't have the Specialty needed for the Mission.
- Are a lower Tier than the Target.

JOINING A FACTION'S LEADERSHIP

It's possible for a Pilot or Squad to gain access to the proceedings of Faction management even if they didn't take part in its creation or the campaign began before the players had access to these rules. This is most likely to occur with a democratic Faction, as theoretically every squad has a say in the Faction's direction, but it could potentially happen with any Faction type. As is stated at the top of this chapter, these rules complicate play and everyone should be on board with their adoption.

TRADING TIER FOR SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES

Sometimes the Pilots will need need Supply Points desperately but have no way of getting them. In these situations it's possible for the Squad to dig deep and get what they need by lowering their Tier. This represents the squad lowering their maintenance standards, selling off their high end gear, and generally scraping together whatever they can. This can only be done during the Downtime Phase but does not cost a Downtime Activity.

If the Players decide to do this their Squad's Tier immediately decreases by 1, but their Hold remains the same, and they get Supply Points equal to their new tier times 8. For example, if a Squad is decreasing from Tier III to Tier II, it gains 16 Supply Points. As normal these Supply Pints must be assigned to Personnel or Materiel, and any Supply Points that exceed the Squad's storage must be spent before the end of Downtime or they are lost. The lost Tier must be regained through the normal process of increasing the Squad's Tier.

If the Pilots are part of their Faction's Leadership, they can degrade a squad instead of assigning it to a Mission. The affected squad's Tier is lowered by 1, it loses 1 Status with the Faction, and the Faction gains Resource Points equal to the squad's new tier times 3. For example, if a squad is degraded from Tier III to Tier II, its Faction gains 6 Resource Points. The lost Tier must be regained through the normal process of increasing the squad's Tier.

BUILDING A SQUAD FROM COHORTS

When a Squad needs allies but can’t seem to find any, it’s possible for them to create some by splitting off a fireteam. If the Squad has a fireteam Cohort, it can be split off of the Players' Squad to form their own squad. The new squad has a Tier one lower than the Player Squad, and starts with a +1 Status with the Players' Squad. If there are any ticks in the Mistreatment Clock for the Cohort, subtract the number of ticks from the starting Status (min -3). The Players’ Squad loses the fireteam Cohort squad upgrade, which can be replaced through the normal means of acquiring one.

THE WAR AND OTHER CONFLICTS

The War here in Izya is all-consuming. The constant skirmishes between the Factions have left countless dead and injured in their wake. Lives are uprooted and destroyed in moments and no one really believes that anyone has the civilians in mind. I was born in The War, I became a priest in The War, and I've abandoned damn near everyone I've ever cared about because of The War.

So it's easy to forget that the situation is far worse: it's just *a* war. The place of my birth is just a little stretch of land with a politically advantageous space elevator, a drop in the ocean compared to the greater conflict out there among the stars.

My sources in the Celestial Myriad informed me of a splinter fleet that was pressing into DFS space in pursuit of some great prize. Apparently the Federated Systems have been hiding some sort of massive space salvage yard in one of their uninhabited territories. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before the Empire decides to take notice of it as well. I can only begin to guess at what could be on those old wrecks—I prefer to leave space combat to the Norrish.

Speaking of Jovangel and the Adamant Council, Julia tells me that the Norrish siege of her home system, Veranost, has been… *overtaken* by something called "CalazCon!" I'm almost afraid to ask. It sounds like something Tower would have been interested in, and yet there's an uncharacteristically panicked look in Julia's eyes when she talks about it.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

THE STEEL MEADOWS

The Phantom Squid

By Bryan Young

Captain Jamie Falcon knew they were running a risk, but all the intel told her the payoff would be worth it.

“Coming in quiet,” Aubrey, the *Phantom Squid*’s navigator, assured her as though they read her mind. That’s why they were the one at the helm and not the captain. It was like they could almost sense the future. Came in handy on any ship, let alone an ancient pirating vessel.

“Good. The last thing we want is to attract attention.”

Ram, the first mate, scoffed. “We could have come up with better ways to not attract attention than to decide to loot a ship in the Dead Snake. If the DFS and their Peace Breakers don’t catch on, the Myriad is likely to. Unless they beat us to the punch.”

“That’s defeatist, Ram.” Jamie waved a dismissive hand, then turned back to Aubrey. “Just bring us in easy. Yeah, it’s that one. Right there.”

“You know this is harder than it looks,” Aubrey kept their hands at the controls and eyes on the viewscreen. The *Phantom Squid* itself weaved in and out of the long string of derelict cruisers queuing in the Snake, waiting for their salvaged funerals. Falcon and the crew decided the best approach trajectory kept them heading from the tail to the head, as it were, rather than from the broadside. Less chance of getting picked up on sensors or picked off by DFS drones that way.

And the ship they’d planned to board and loot was right there ahead of them.

The Colossus.

For some reason, even with a name like that, Falcon thought the ship would have been smaller, given everything she’d heard, but she supposed that they didn’t waste time decommissioning and scrapping the small ones in the Snake. There were other places in the Steel Meadows for that. The ship was a massive oval of a battlecruiser from a bygone age, painted up in Myriad colors faded from a hundred years in the sun.

The Dead Snake was the largest queue in the history of human existence. Every ancient ship the DFS had in their fleet and the biggest ships they captured or happened to sweep up that needed decommissioning usually made its way to the Snake’s tail. And since salvage operations were painfully slow and the operation itself criminally underfunded, it took so much longer than it should have. Where

people didn't properly fund the things they needed to make their society function, that's where the *Phantom Squid* traditionally found opportunities.

Falcon clapped her hands together and rubbed, taking a closer look at their target. *The Colossus*, true to its name, had all manner of old antennae and sensor rods jutting out the front and back as though they were reaching out into time and space, still collecting information and performing some outdated science mission. Hell, that stuff had probably been out of date by the time Jamie Falcon's grandfather's grandmother's grandmother was captain of the *Intrepid*, exploring unknown space after the Exodus.

Ultimately, it didn't matter how out of date the ship was. It was what was allegedly on board that was so important.

When the spacer at the bar in the Rhizome—the makeshift space station that served as a city in the Steel Meadows—told Falcon about the potential score, she couldn't believe her ears. Maybe she shouldn't have believed her at all. Maybe she was being sold a bill of goods, but if there were relics of Saint Hassan aboard, the Church of the Celestial Myriad would pay handsomely for it. Handsomely was probably an understatement, too. Once, someone found a page of his journal—and really, who wrote by hand in journals in an era of space travel?—and it fetched an exorbitant sum on the black market. And that was to an intermediary, who was still going to make even more money from the Myriad.

If the stories were true, then it was going to be worth the risk of traveling through the Dead Snake, flying under the noses of the Democratic Federated Systems' stooges, and torquing off the Myriad themselves if they could make the score. *The Colossus* had traveled through areas that made the find likely. There had been a descendent on board who had traveled with Hassan as well. Falcon knew for sure. She checked. And double-checked. The whole thing was plausible. And even if there were no paged saintly relics aboard, there was always something they could boost in order to make the trip pay off somehow.

They were good at that sort of thing.

A team.

“You finish docking. I’m going to suit up in my AWV.” Falcon told Aubrey ·

“You really expecting trouble,” Ram said. “You said this was gonna be a milk run.”

Heading toward the bulkhead that would lead her to the cargo bay, she stopped and grinned at Ram. “You know what a cautious captain I am. It’s why I’m still standing and it’s why we keep staying one step ahead.”

“Tell that to Parker and Igwe.”

“They’re still manning the guns.”

“Their proxies are. That doesn’t mean they’re alive.”

Falcon shrugged. “Close enough.”

Ram shook his head as Falcon left.

Her AWV would be considered light by all standards, standing about nine meters tall on massive chicken legs. Her crew compartment was vacuum tight and would keep her breathing if there was an issue with the atmosphere aboard *The Colossus*. Air leaks on those old derelicts were a common occurrence, so salvage work could get dicey without proper preparation.

That’s why her ground team wore rebreathers and vacuum suits, just in case something went sideways.

But she’d be there to back them up.

Even in a light AWV, most would have declared it overkill for a simple snatch and grab like this, but Falcon liked to be ready for anything.

And more than that, she never felt more comfortable heading into a tricky situation than at the controls of her machine. The rudders and control helmet made her feel like she was stepping less into a machine and more like a uniform.

Her hands on the control sticks, manipulating all of the AWV's functions, were extensions of her own hands. There was a bond with the machine unlike anything she could describe.

And it made her feel powerful. Some described that power as akin to holding a gun, or having a high-ranking position. Sure, being the captain fed into that for Falcon, but most of the power she felt was bestowed upon her by her AWV.

She'd named it *Architeuthis*, after the famed giant squid from Earth's antiquity. Pirates always had a theme, and she guessed big, scary squids was theirs. There was power in those old stories, though. And she relied on that as much as anything.

"Everyone ready to go in?" Falcon asked over her headset.

"Docking sequence initiated, you'll be lined right up with the main hold," came Aubrey's voice.

"Ground crew ready to roll," Ram said. He'd be the operations engineer, calling the plays from the bridge as he monitored the situation.

Checking her video feeds on the AWV's AR display, she saw the wireframe outlines of the fellow pirates and ground-pounders that would be going in with her. Their suits, with blank face shields and raised laser rifles with hoses still connecting to their backs, made them look like something out of a nightmare.

"Airlock opening in T-minus five," Aubrey said, counting down. "Four three, two…"

On "one," the incredible bulkhead door at the end of the hangar, big enough to admit an AWV as large as the heaviest they made, began to open up from the bottom. *Architeuthis* wouldn't need that much clearance, but it was nice to know she had it. And, according to the specs, the Colossus would have no issue with *Architeuthis* roaming its tall corridors, they were built for the purpose.

But before she could move, an explosion ruptured at her feet.

"It's an ambush!" one of the ground-pounders cried.

The soldiers got the first view of the other side of the bulkhead door. It would be another ten or fifteen seconds before Falcon got a look at the situation herself, but the firing had already begun.

“Who is it?” she called out, hoping for more information. Information was always the key.

The door rolled up the rest of the way and there was an AWV on the other side and a pretty equal compliment of soldiers with small arms. Falcon didn’t recognize their colors, but she knew an ambush when she saw one.

The AWV was slightly larger than hers, closer to ten meters tall, but not much taller than hers. It had spindly arms with laser cannons attached and thick legs that looked like they could kick the heads from elephants.

Maybe it had.

Falcon didn’t recognize the paint scheme or uniform colors—all black with red trim—which led her to think she was perhaps dealing with another private merc outfit rather than the Myriad or the DFS.

Falcon didn’t wait until she was hit to start blasting. She could ask questions later. All she knew was that the prize was likely not going to be theirs if the cargo bay alone was this well-defended on a derelict cruiser.

“Going weapons hot…”

Falcon pulled the trigger and thumbed the firing stud on her control sticks, unleashing ruby laser lances and a battery of missiles across the vast space of the combined cargo holds, impacting against the enemy AWV. Lasers carved chunks from its metal armor, the missiles erupted in a cascade down its front. It returned fire, which was not something Falcon wanted. Fighting anything, let alone an AWV, *inside* a ship was bad news, especially if you wanted to keep a ship flying. Punch a hole in the hull and it was basically a free ticket to the cold and uncertain death of space. No one looked forward to that. And the fact that this group was willing to fire into the Phantom Squid, just as she was willing to fire out, told Captain Falcon that they were probably pirates, too. No defense force stooges would do that. And the Myriad wasn’t likely to start blasting first either.

No, they’d been sold into a trap for salvage, or someone else had gotten the same intel and beat them to the punch.

“Damnit.”

“The longer you make that fight the shorter we’re gonna last, Cap,” Ram said.

She hated that he was right.

They weren’t getting on that ship and they weren’t getting their score. They weren’t even going to make it out with their lives if they didn’t do something drastic and fast.

As if on cue, the lasers firing from the opposing AWV missed *Architeuthis*, boring holes of molten slag into the back bulkhead of the cargo hold.

“Back it up, folks,” she said, giving the order. “We’re getting out of here. This isn’t worth getting spaced.”

“You heard her,” Ram reiterated.

The soldiers at her feet pulled back, laying down a suppressing fire the whole way.

“Get that door closed,” she yelled. “Now!”

They didn’t have the numbers to besiege the ship. If they were boarding and whoever was on the other side hadn’t been ready to defend themselves, then maybe they’d have had a chance. Like this, the risk wasn’t worth the reward.

The enemy AWV stepped forward as the bulkhead door began to close.

Then it stepped faster, firing all the while.

“They’re going to do it…” Falcon told herself, incredulous. There was no way they would risk it. AWVs were expensive machines.

“Get that door sealed,” Ram shouted through the radio.

The AWV made a dive for the door, a laser beam carving a piece from Falcon’s armored leg.

Then it slammed down, crashing into the arm of the other pirate.

“Door sealed,” Ram said.

“Get us the hell out of here. Now,”

Falcon said, giving the order.

Even with the stabilizing gyro in her AWV, she felt the kick of acceleration hit the ship as they sped away, dodging between other derelicts and the DFS patrols.

“I think it was a trap,” Ram told her.

“You think?” she shot back.

“What are we going to do about it?”

Falcon sighed. “We’re going back to the station and we’re going to find our friend who sold us out.”

“Sounds like a plan,” Ram said, the grin on his face shining through in his voice.

Falcon took in a deep cleansing breath, preferring revenge cold. “I promise you, she’s going to wish she never met us.”

Inside of the territory held by the Democratic Federated Systems is an isolated backwater star without a single habitable planet. Like all DFS backwater systems it is officially “an important member of the state.” Unlike most DFS backwaters, this is partially true.

Legally the system is named Partially Inhabited System LKE-341. The PIS label indicates the lack of habitable planets but the presence of artificial habitation platforms generally occupied by DFS military to keep an eye on the system’s resources, and the knowledge that getting stationed to such a system means you have piss poor luck. No one knows if the bureaucrat that chose the label knew what they did or if they had a sense of humor. LKE-341 has another name though that is classified: The Steel Meadows.

The Steel Meadows are a graveyard of incalculable scale containing centuries of star ships too damaged to be used in The War. Most are DFS but some are salvage from The War's other belligerents. Their scarred and maimed forms wait quietly in relatively close proximity, monitored by an automated drone system that adjusts their positions ensuring they don't drift off or collide. They are kept in this stasis so that one day they can be broken down and recycled by the Peace Breakers; the DFS group assigned to the system.

It's quiet, if hard, work for the Breakers, and while most are initially dismayed upon hearing they've been assigned to a PIS, many eventually come to appreciate the predictable dangers of the job. No enemy ambushes, no upper brass commanding suicide charges, no unreported megafauna mauling AWVs in territorial disputes. Just the familiar dangers of ancient exposed reactor cores, industrial machinery, and the vast uncaring vacuum of space. The biggest form of unpredictability is the budget as the pencil pushers in the DFS military perennially undervalue the work done in the Steel Meadows, and so the backlog of ships to dissect slowly grows.

Regardless of the honor bestowed on them, they pridefully contribute to the war effort in solitude, splitting hulls, sorting salvage, and shipping it to factories in more heavily populated systems. Sometimes a rare component or design is discovered in one of the ancient hulks. Usually an agent from military intelligence, the R&D corps, or both are called in to come collect the object. Occasionally the Breakers hold onto it because it might come in handy, or to sell on the next trip out of system to supplement the group's rainy day fund. It is for these rare finds that the true nature of LKE-341 is kept classified, even if the Steel Meadows have become an urban legend among The War's intelligence agents.

Unfortunately this comforting path has been broken by an interstellar transmission originating somewhere within the Steel Meadows. Not being a listening post the Peace Breakers weren't able to pinpoint the origin of the signal, but the message used amateurish encryption and was cracked by a hobbyist cryptographer in the Breakers shortly after it was sent. It contained the true nature and location of the Steel Meadows.

In short order, several interlopers have entered the system to see what advantage they can gain before the DFS sends personnel sufficient to enforce security. The largest of these groups is a small fleet of Celestial Myriad ships that recklessly volunteered to enact The Faith's will. Their aim is to plant enough deadly seeds so that even when the DFS reinforces the system, it can never be locked

away again. Their actions are strange, however, so the Peace Breakers don't know if it's the difference in their technology and ideology, or if some other hidden goal drives them.

Even with the sudden appearance of the intruders, the Peace Breakers still have supply quotas to fill and a budget that wasn't quite enough even before they had to fight a war. So they'll have to make use of their ship breaking skills, squirrelled away funds, and try to find unexpected allies among the invaders. They just have to hold out until the DFS reinforcements arrive...

LIST OF SQUADS ACTIVE IN THE STEEL MEADOWS

DEMOCRACY SQUADS

While sorely put upon by the situation, the Democratic Federated Systems squads operating in The Steel Meadows have one major advantage: they all share the ultimate strategic goal of pushing all non-DFS agents out of the system. They may have their own goals operating alongside that greater desire, but almost any DFS personnel will unflinchingly agree with the statement "The Steel Meadows is for the DFS only." Unfortunately that belief is also their greatest weakness.

The DFS believe that The Steel Meadows is theirs, and has been since the first research station was built in the system, however, that hasn't been true for a long time. While one of the DFS' best kept secrets, the process of constantly bringing salvage into the system has also regularly shipped in "contaminants:" technology alien to DFS imaginations. These contaminants have myriad effects, but each one is a potential land mine that the DFS has carelessly tossed into its own back yard. Any Peace Breaker who claims to know The Meadows like the back of their hand is dangerously ignorant or delusional.

- **The Peace Breakers** (IV-W Democracy) are the scrappers that tear down the ships of the Steel Meadows. They are also tasked with deterring trespassers and occasionally with retrieving salvage from outside of the Meadows. With the invasion of the system by the Celestial Myriad (and others) they've turned their ship breaking skills towards dissecting enemy ships and building a ram shackle fleet. GOAL: Survive until reinforcements arrive.
- **Federated Navy Star Ship Deliberate** (Tier III-S Democracy) is the oldest star ship in the Stellar Navy. It was the flagship three generations ago, obsolete a generation ago, and then has returned to service as an absurdly tough ship due to the odd nature of its ancient systems. Though stationed in the Steel Meadows for repairs because many of its components are no

longer manufactured and must be salvaged, it has been reactivated to help defend the system. GOAL: Return to fully functional status.

- **404th Karadine Mechanized Cavalry-[RECOVERY]** (Tier III-W Democracy) were a highly decorated AWV unit known for always getting the job done no matter the cost thanks to the experimental Pilot Backup System (PBS) which enabled the AWV to keep fighting in the event of catastrophic injury. A disastrous mission to capture the Jovangellian destroyer Hammerhead left both the battleship and the 404th's transport crippled, landing them both in the Steel Meadows. When Breakers cracked open their wrecked transport, the PBS system reactivated, equipping each AWV with a digital backup of the original pilot. GOAL: Capture the Hammerhead and return to base.
- **4th Intelligence Corp** (Tier II-S Democracy) is an investigative unit sent to find the source and reason behind the transmission that revealed the Steel Meadows location. Everyone's a suspect. GOAL: Find the source of the leak.
- **Free Pasture** (Tier II-W Democracy) is a group of scientists and activists dedicated to researching and conserving the unique ecosystem they believe to be developing in the Meadows. They make their home on and alongside the paragon of this belief: an interstellar hermit crab that has made its home in the husk of an old dreadnought. Authorised to use force to deter any who would threaten this jewel of the natural world and, finding new wonders within it every day, the recent incursion finds them resorting to this measure with grim, reluctant resolve. GOAL: Locate and protect areas of ecological significance.
- **The 14th Analysis Unit** (Tier II-W Democracy). Experienced scientists and engineers tasked with determining what is and isn't safe to leave the system. Leaking reactors, unstable explosives, experimental weapons and even stranger things require their constant attention. They say they have the most dangerous job away from the front line and now they are probably right, horrors put to bed may reawaken with these new interlopers but the 14th will put them back in their cages. Proud and precise they've not missed anything yet and they'll be damned if they do. GOAL: Locate and neutralize Hazardous Materials.
- **The Derelicts** (Tier I-S Democracy), nominally a small DFS shipbreaking squad subordinate to the Peace Breakers, run several drug labs out of the Meadows' space hulks. Shipbreaking is boring, hard, and dangerous work; although regulations emphatically forbid it, use of stimulants to stay awake and engaged enough to meet ever-climbing quotas is common among the troops. The Derelicts step in to meet that demand. Hard-vacuum labs let them brew drugs from chemicals too toxic to use inside a planetary atmosphere - for example, the gaseous gain

medium of DFS energy weapons. GOAL: Buy off, or scare off, anyone investigating their activities.

THEOCRACY SQUADS

The Church of the Celestial Myriad is the belligerent with the most unified public face, perhaps only less than the Jovangellian Empire. While there are definitely doctrinal differences *within* the Church, their belief in the Faith binds them together, and any disagreements are a private matter to be discussed in house. It's understood that when a Celestial Myriad force is assembled, each gathered piece's beliefs and goals are to be carefully woven together into a cohesive tapestry that honors the Faith.

The Steel Meadows Schismatic Fleet is anything but ordered. Seeing a rare chance that must be acted upon immediately, the leaders of the Church grabbed whatever forces were available, put them on jump ships, and pointed them at the opportunity. While they are technically tasked with "making The Steel Meadows unsuitable for DFS purposes," that mandate is so broad AND vague that the squads sent devolved into argument while en route. Each one has its own ideas about what the DFS' purposes are, and what it would mean for an entire system to become incompatible with those goals.

Upon arrival the Schismatic Fleet immediately shattered across ideological fault lines. Put in charge of the fleet, Senior Kin Piper Padolus (The Children of Saint Marigold's leader) was unable to hold the squads together as they all knew she and her followers were completely ignorant of micro gravity maneuvers. While they have yet to come to blows over their differences, their actions are largely uncoordinated, only coming together on a temporary basis.

- **BISH0P'S DR3AM** (Tier IV-W Theocracy). Cyberattacks have been an essential part of the War since practically day one. The first salvos of an invasion aren't missiles, they're DDoS attacks that obliterate banking systems and shut down power plants. However, when it comes to black hat ops, there's few better than the galactically infamous hacker collective BISH0P'S DR3AM. United in their veneration of St. Bishop, the patron saint of cybersecurity, these high-tech monks make up for their lack of weaponry with automated drones and nigh-unstoppable computer viruses. GOAL: steal Peace Breaker records of space hulk/junk orbits, rendering the Steel Meadows practically unnavigable to the DFS.

- **The Children of Saint Marigold** (Tier III-W Theocracy) are a ground combat unit that was en route to the Izyan Conflict when they were diverted to the Steel Meadows. Deeply out of their element, this veteran squad is operating at a deficit. GOAL: Adapt to space combat.
- **The Hands of Hidden Wrath** (Tier III-W Theocracy) are an order of sappers, trappers, and military engineers. Tasked with making sure that the Celestial Myriad can never be permanently removed from the system. GOAL: Make the Steel Meadows impossible to hold.
- **The Penitent** (Tier II-S Theocracy) are a squad given an impossible task to achieve their redemption. They are looking for a Saint's remains said to be in the Steel Meadows and with its location revealed their task is within reach. GOAL: Find the remains of Saint Hassan.
- **The Shield Reforged** (Tier II-S Theocracy) are mechanics and medics dedicated to rescue and recovery. Each full initiate wears armour reclaimed from the battlefield, its white ceramic spiderwebbed with golden shatter-pattern repairs. Their expertise in engineering under fire could be invaluable if put to use to bring the ships of The Steel Meadows to fighting strength, but is that a rare opportunity for them to bring retribution upon the DFS forces they blame for the suffering of their comrades, or a breach of their vows to never strike first? GOAL: Resolve the debate and commit one way or the other.
- **The Voice of Reason** (Tier II-S Theocracy) are a cell of covert Celestial Myriad agents who arrived in the Steel Meadows before the fleet to do what they do best: Enact the Faith’s Will through their “softer”, “less violent” ways of conversion. Their usual MO is to infiltrate the leadership and working elements of important enemy organizations, destabilizing them from within through internal conflict and thus easing their transition to Faithful guidance. Because of this, the Voice's operatives make sure to discard any markings or vestments that may mark them as members of the Faith. GOAL: Embed agents within the Peace Breakers.
- **The Other Shrine** (Tier I-S Theocracy) is a slang term used to refer to gambling, trade in contraband luxuries, and bunkroom distilleries without attracting the attention of any officers who aren’t already taking a cut. Here, these illicit activities are supplied by a loose network of contacts in the fleet’s logistical corps. Shared grumbling about superiors has always been a feature of this unmonitored communication channel, but it’s more and more focused on fleet command’s recklessness; mutinous sentiments are gathering momentum. GOAL: Cut in a ship captain to establish a centre of operations in the fleet.

INDEPENDENT SQUADS

The War's many and varied conflicts always bring many strange and unique elements to the fore. The Steel Meadows and the quickly heating strife therein are stranger than most, and so too are the independent squads bubbling to the top. Some are trying to better their lives, others seek glory and fortune, and a few have odder goals in mind.

- **Overlord** (Tier IV-W Independent) is an AI networked across a handful of badly damaged ships built long ago during a time when the Myriad and DFS were allies. Over the last 100 years it has been slowly rebuilding itself using the salvage around it by manipulating the DFS ship monitoring drones. GOAL: Become powerful enough to control the Steel Meadows.
- **Crew of the Phantom Squid** (Tier III-S Independent). The pirate crew of the Phantom Squid have arrived. Hotshot aces with boiling blood plan raids, relive past battles and sharpen their blades ready for the next boarding, while the ghostly proxies of their lost crewmates man the cannons. Under the billowing banner of this old ship and the lead of her captain the crew launch as if from nowhere and disappear just as fast, dragging their quarry into the inky black with hooks and steel. GOAL: Find a legendary machine lost in the steel meadows.
- **The Ecliptic Coven** (Tier II-S) are a small mercenary company who are rumored to be witches. What that means exactly varies on who you ask, but two things about them are certain: they punch above their numbers and favor fighting in tangled terrain. GOAL: Take contracts that respect us.
- **The Amber Estoc** (Tier II-W Independent) is a holed Norrish destroyer from a bygone battle. Deep in its hold, a full unit of Norrish marines have awoken from their failing cryo pods to find that they've been asleep and forgotten for decades. Deep behind enemy lines, low on supplies, and still getting their bearings, the marines of the Amber Estoc won't have an easy time getting back home. GOAL: Repair the Amber Estoc and escape the Steel Meadows with it.
- **The Joyriders** (Tier II-W Independent) have been running an AWV demolition derby from a junkyard moon for a few years, fuelled by the near-universal desire to see huge pieces of machinery blow up spectacularly. Only recently have they found financial success, after Jed "Hot-Blood" Biter took over operations at the age of eighteen. Now they're not just hedonistic and brash but keen and business-savvy too, and they know that amidst the larger scramble for tech is the perfect time to slip into the Steel Meadows and start franchising. GOAL: Establish a new derby arena within the Steel Meadows

- **Void Widow** (Tier I-S Independent). Despite their exceedingly harsh conditions, space hulks still house a variety of strange and nasty ecosystems. Like most extremophilic lifeforms, hulk-dwellers just want to live to see another hour. The biggest exception to this rule is the Void Widow, a gestalt consciousness of communists housed inside a giant spider. The widow split off from Shift-home due to “the crypto-reactionary nature of anarcho-transhumanism proving it an ideological inferior to arachno-antimenschism”, and now floats on a web-bubble from hulk to hulk, practicing bio-guerilla warfare on anyone it deems bourgeois. GOAL: prowl hulks for archaic cybernetics, use them to grow stronger and stranger.
- **Shift-home** (Tier I-W Independent) is a transhumanist anarchist collective barely staying afloat as it works to remain independent while also providing for the niche necessities of its denizens. For the last 5 years they’ve been secretly living in the Steel Meadows having stumbled across it by accident. GOAL: Meet the varied needs of its members.

THE DEAD SNAKE

I hate funerals. I’ve been to too many, *presided* over too many, and the memories sting.

I would never have thought machines could have a funeral procession of their own. Yet looking at the video feed sent to me by my contact, I can’t help but make the comparison. Silent, dead hulks drifting languidly in a sinuous line toward their eventual cremation. This morbid parade is a monument to the cost of the fighting, writ large in metal and wires.

For the first time in a long time, I find myself contemplating the divine.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

The Dead Snake, officially referred to as the Cutting Bay 4 Processing Queue, is the largest waiting line in existence, much to the dismay of everyone on it. Hundreds of hulking star ship husks queue to arrive at the only working cutting bay that can fit the largest dreadnoughts. The progress is sluggish. It floats in the void like a swirling serpent, undulating and moving in irregular jolts. Exhausted Peace Breakers skitter through its innards like termites with plasma cutters. And now, with the Celestial Myriad on the way, to add insult to injury they’re expected to *defend* it.

SCENE

Peace Breakers in a CWV strapped with a mismatched anti-armour rifle nervously stare out of its portholes. Shadows play in space. Might be the Myriad finally arriving. Perhaps they're already here, sneaking along the Snake's belly. Might be that cutting crew from a few ships down - turned maniacs by the wasting sense of time, they heard. No…nothing. They return to stripping sheets off the monstrous dead husk of a cruiser they are on. Tiresome task, but better than the wait. The endless wait.

NOTABLES

Oddogai the Broken Priest. Always encased in a helmeted environmental suit for work on the outside of the ships. They have turned their crew to a cult of deliverance. Other Breaker crews think they are mad, and yet, it's hard not to give the promise of freedom from this everlasting work a thought. They await the Myriad in the hopes of finally getting off the Snake. They're having their followers collect valuable recycled materials as peace offering. (Cryptic, greedy.)

LANDMARKS

At the head of the Snake, the red lights of Cutting Bay 4's thermal mincers glow like an angry steel-chewing star. It's well-defended and constantly kept at work to produce new usable materials.

The top of the Snake sports an improvised rail, the Spine, transport of supplies and recycled material removed by the Peace Breakers. However, carts are regularly raided by Peace Breaker deserters, drones from Overlord, and Shift Home scavengers out for a decent smash-and-grab.

A handful of salvage ships retrofitted as DFS cruisers travel along the Snake, desperately trying to coordinate the workers and prepare for the expected Myriad attack. They've attempted to bolster their ranks by rejuvenating husk battleships from the Snake, making for much-needed but ultimately precarious reinforcements.

RATINGS

The Dead Snake Area has Wealth 1, Might 1, Crime 3, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

While operating on the *outside* of the Dead Snake, a 6-step clock called *Moving Segments* is always in play. If this clock gets filled, the part of the Snake the players are on starts to move as it gets

rearranged, moved forwards, or moved backwards in the queue. This worsens the players' position until they empty the clock.

The *Moving Segments* clock could get ticked by a hacker designating the segment as high priority in the queue's organisational matrix, by a mad engineer kicking the shipwreck's cockpit to life, or by explosions on the wreck triggering a system that removes highly volatile ships.

Ticks could be removed when players break the engines of the wreck's carrying frame, use a stolen administrator badge to give a stopping command, or use a vehicle of their own with strong propulsion to push in the opposite direction. It can also be emptied by players making moves to escape to another segment, like navigating enemy drones to get to the ship's far end, or repairing a broken Spine transport cart.

THE PUNISHMENT QUARTER

The Penitent are the children of the dark side of the Myriad. They are desperate souls, and whether through their own will or forceful coercion, they take on unthinkable missions to atone for their alleged sins.

I'm not surprised to hear they are in these so-called Steel Meadows, seeking to recover the lost body of a Saint. Reports say the DFS has rigged practically an entire Myriad fleet with traps to stop scavengers… a natural target to throw those poor damned souls at. It brings back early memories of the Cenotaph, when we were ordered to recover Saint Gertrude from the Broken Bank.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Deep in the Steel Meadows lie the remains of ships captured from Celestial Myriad prisoners, full of valuable salvage - and crawling with deadly traps poised to spring on incautious explorers. These days, the only scavengers that dare venture into the Punishment Quarter are the Peace Breakers' most hardened veterans, and the Myriad's own Penitents, who seek the body of Saint Hassan amongst the ruins of comrades long past.

SCENE

Penitent scavengers desperately input incompatible deactivation codes into rusty Myriad jammer bombs. The bombs pulse out mangled code, shutting down swarms of DFS anti-collision

drones. Two battlecruisers painted Myriad blue freefloat towards each other and explode into noiseless light. A Breaker ferry swerves, managing to avoid a clipped wing. The pilot checks her cargo hold: she's only reached half her quota. With a sigh, she sets course to home. That's enough close calls for one day.

NOTABLES

Burning Myrrh, a Penitent seeking Saint Hassan's remains. Formerly *Captain* Myrrh, he was stripped of title upon failing to defend a crucial outpost from Federated forces. He now acts as the Penitents' leader, wearing a Captain uniform stained red to signify the blood his negligence spilled. Focused and magnanimous, he is nevertheless quick to anger if his faith is insulted. (Zealous, authoritative.)

LANDMARKS

In its day, the *Empyrean* was an MVP carrier sporting chapels, meditative sanctuaries, a dais from which to bless armies. Now its stained glass is shattered, its pews but splinters. Its engine would be the Quarter's greatest bounty, if the Breakers could get past its array of autolasers, electromagnetic mines and shock-wire tangles. The Penitents believe Saint Hassan's corpse kneels at the *Empyrean*'s altar, praying to be found by the Myriad.

RATINGS

The Punishment Quarter has Wealth 0, Might 2, Crime 1 and Tech 4.

SPECIAL RULE

When your actions disturb an abandoned ship, such as by forcing a lock or blasting a wall, add a Tick to the 4-Tick clock "Feast or Famine". If this clock fills, reset its Ticks to zero and make a Fortune roll using 1d. On a 1-3, you spring a trap; take a Harm/Damage appropriate to your position. On a 4-5, you find a crumbling, "fine" item that doesn't take up Gear and disappears at the end of the mission. On a 6, you exhume large machinery valuable enough to trade for a Materiel point, assuming you can haul it home.

THE DOC

The scale of normal operations in the Steel Meadows defies any meaningful description. Keeping all that metal organized and moving must require an army of drones. A team capable of

managing all of that would have to be massive—almost a second navy in its own right.

I'm sure they've automated it, otherwise the Myriad's Schismatic Fleet would have been wiped out the moment they entered the system by an overwhelming force of soldiers. Even so, the programming that would have gone into that must be a technological wonder. I'm sure Exodus would pay good money to get their hands on that technology.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Part control center, part repair bay, the DOC (Drone Operations Center) is an entirely automated hub that controls the Steel Meadows' entire system of ship handling drones. From this single lynchpin, anything and everything relating to the operation, monitoring, and maintenance of the system's thousands of drones is performed by two apps: Forge and Marshal. Their work is critical to ensuring the smooth day-to-day functioning of the Steel Meadows.

SCENE

Drones whizz past each other at high speed in heavily congested traffic, perfect programming the only thing preventing a high-speed crash. Hundreds of spare drones fill a cavernous room, their orange standby lights glimmering dimly in the dark. An ancient drone sits on a maintenance line as robotic arms spring from the wall and crack open its frame to replace a dead battery.

NOTABLES

Marshal is the app in charge of administration on the DOC, directing the Steel Meadows' entire contingent of drones and monitoring them afield. The sheer amount of drones they must monitor pushes their processor to its capacity, leaving them short on patience when interacting with people. (Irritable, stressed.) Forge is in charge of maintaining both the drones and the DOC itself and runs most of the physical machinery in the station. They only ever respond to direct queries, and do so in a direct and highly technical manner. (Taciturn, abstruse.)

LANDMARKS

The station is a simple sphere with its center carved away into a deep trench. This trench is the central highway through which almost all drone traffic goes, with numerous gateways on either side to

reach more specific locations. One hemisphere is dedicated primarily to storage, while the other is for maintenance. At the relative “top” of the DOC is a large sensor array that also houses the apps’ cores. Though the DOC operates entirely autonomously, there is an access platform on the maintenance side that can fit a single small vessel or squad of AWVs.

RATINGS

The DOC has Wealth 2, Might 2, Crime 0, and Tech 4.

SPECIAL RULE

The DOC is filled with enough drones that one could reasonably be on hand at any given moment. A pilot may make an Interface action to give a single drone one command no longer than a sentence. The drone will move to perform this action before automatically continuing with its previous orders.

LKE-341b

Modern targeting systems are improving all the time, but AWV firefights in the dark and the fog remain unpleasant experiences if you’re not prepared. Or if you have access to Lady Elreth’s kind of gear. Of course, covert raids during such circumstances are ideal.

In orbital combat, there is no mist, but there are ice crystals, dust, debris, gas, and all manner of other atmospheric and man-made phenomena out there to wreak havoc with your instruments. A squad using that to its advantage makes a lot of sense, especially if you can find a big concentration of it like the cloud around LKE-341b.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

A Neptune-like planet that long ago drifted too close to its sun, LKE-341b’s thick atmosphere is in the slow, millennia-long process of disintegrating from the heat. In its current transitory state, much of that atmosphere has dispersed into a massive cloud around the entire planet that will likely continue to stubbornly cling to it for a few centuries yet. But in the meantime, these dissipating gasses are a valuable tactical advantage for anyone looking to work covertly, escape pursuers, or evade prying eyes.

SCENE

Sunlight pierces through a sea of methane, making it come alight in brilliant, glittering puffs of blues. A single drone drifts listlessly in orbit, its connection to the DOC severed as it stares down at the planet's surface. Hidden away in the planet's dispersing atmosphere, a squad of Myriad pilots have left their AWVs to plan their next operation face-to-face inside a tiny space station.

NOTABLES

Lal Delrid of the Celestial Myriad has established a semi-permanent outpost on one of the abandoned wrecks orbiting LKE-341b. They have a stiff and decorous demeanor ingrained into them by their military training. They run their outpost like a safehouse, offering a safe haven to Myriad forces first and a strategic center to strike at the enemy from second. They're sympathetic enough that they might be convinced to help others outside the Myriad so long as it doesn't go against their objectives in the Steel Meadows. (Formal, warm.)

LANDMARKS

The dissipating atmosphere around LKE-341b stretches for hundreds of miles around the planet in every direction. Deep inside this mist of gasses, several small, decrepit, and long since abandoned space stations sit at varying levels of decaying orbit. They are largely stripped of anything useful and aren't remotely comfortable to inhabit, but some still at least have breathable air and can provide a functional space to rest and plan in an emergency.

RATINGS

LKE-341b has Wealth 0, Might 1, Crime 1, and Tech 1

SPECIAL RULE

The field of evaporating atmosphere around LKE-341b wreaks havoc with electronic and communications equipment alike, making it an ideal hiding place. Take -1d to any Resolve action when using equipment such as radios or long-distance transmitters, as well as Scan.

THE CHROME GALLERY

Art and war have a lot in common, and anyone who tells you otherwise hasn't been around enough artists. Creation and destruction are both notably human obsessions; we try to find meaning in both of them. Plus, after enough drinks, some artists would happily shoot their rivals.

What meaning should we take from a gallery the artist doesn't even know it is hosting? Or does this lonely station out in DFS space find some purpose in its beautiful progeny of twisted metal? The created has become the creator.

Sad to think someone will likely just blow it to hell.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

When the *Echidna* Mobile Manufactory, the DFS' first mobile shipyard, was finally decommissioned and laid to rest after centuries of service, that should have been the end of it. Instead, someone turned what was left of it back on. It's been building ever since - not ships, but glitched, fractal sculptures, feverish imaginings of what a spacecraft might be. Salvagers brought to the Meadows by the siren call of the broadcast pick through the mass of chrome for specimens intriguing enough to sell as curios or art objects, or crack them open to puzzle over the tech within. Meanwhile, a Peace Breakers expeditionary squad searches for the core of the *Echidna*, to turn it off at the source before its detritus swamps the area - or collides with something catastrophic.

SCENE

The *Echidna* belches forth a new creation, causing a rippling wave as it slams into one sculpture, which slams into another, and so on, like a zero-g Newton's cradle. Three Breakers take a lunch break perched atop one of the *Echidna*'s comms towers, and argue about what the sculptures above most resemble. An AWV's point-defence laser flares in the distance, as an impatient pilot carves through the debris.

NOTABLES

Morgan Orbit, leader of a gang of newly-arrived salvagers that has found success carving out a niche in the unique finds of the Gallery. From their lair in a hollowed out sculpture, they lead risky

raids on promising finds, taking advantage of dangerous weather events or *Echidna* activity to descend and strip a sculpture bare before the Breakers catch on. Lately, something's been pressing on Morgan's mind; they're convinced that they can make out a name engraved in the chunk of sculpture they wear around their neck, and their curiosity is beginning to affect their work. (Amicable, foolhardy.)

LANDMARKS

Base Camp Perseus, the primary outpost for the Breakers' scouting efforts. A prefab hexagonal dome mounted on the largest sculpture ever made by *Echidna*. A constant hum that sets the teeth on edge surrounds the base, thanks to the gravitic stabilisers set in place to prevent the sculpture's rotation. Ultraviolet light from a beacon for returning scouting parties dances across the chrome. Drones drift like bees from hatches in the dome, drilling samples from the sculpture for analysis.

RATINGS

The Chrome Gallery has Wealth 1, Might 1, Crime 2, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

The Gallery is choked with debris that favours the small and maneuverable. Barring an imaginative solution or preparation, Maneuver actions here are never Controlled. Prowl actions are never Desperate.

DAWSON'S INFERNO

Space is filled with terrible ways to die. The images I've seen from one part of the DFS's secret scrapyard have only cemented this for me. A constantly burning charnel house of wreckage, full of colliding vessels bursting out like kilonovae. Although the volatile debris field is surely uninhabited, the DFS has to take efforts to contain the miasma that fuels the process.

It's the stuff of nightmares. Here on the ground, the blast that may one day get me will at least be comprehensible in its scale. I have to wonder: how can such a hellish place even exists?

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

A cautionary tale among the Breakers tells of an engineer named Dawson, who made a minute but dire error while dismantling a reactor. This roiling sea of noxious gas and molten metal, fueled by an inexorable chain reaction, is his legacy. A firebreak border is kept clear of debris to isolate the reaction, but experts estimate the shipwrecks within will still keep the Inferno fed for centuries. Past that firebreak, it hurts to walk barefoot upon the wrecks, a metal desert. Further in, ships split under the pressure of heated oil and engine fluid, sending geysers billowing from hulls like beached whales. In the depths, the epicentre of the Inferno glows like a second sun. If you're feeling foolhardy, the Inferno has its benefits: many of its ships remain untouched by scavengers, and it's the perfect place for work you would rather remain secret.

SCENE

Breakers maintaining the firebreak play something like curling, pushing wreckage back with shipmounted rams, their laughter clogging the comms channel. A fleeting glimpse of a shuttle returning to some hidden dock, bobbing and weaving through the clouds. Two exosuited salvagers comb a pre-disaster habitat for intel, throwing the detritus of a life hurriedly abandoned out of doors and windows.

NOTABLES

Harron Hawke, the last of the old Breakers of the Inferno. After the disaster, the Breakers in the area were quietly reassigned. Except, that is, for Harron. Even in her retirement, she's adamant that she won't give up her family home, shifting her homestead further from the encroaching heat each year. Beneath her stony facade lies not only a genuine, wistful warmth, but decades of knowledge of the ships of the Inferno, and the best salvage within. (Curmudgeonly, stubborn.)

LANDMARKS

Through the tumult of the Inferno, the *Stalwart Wretch* coasts serene. With all propulsion systems offline, the *Wretch* would just be another wreck, but for the fact that its experimental environmental shielding still functions. The ship thus offers an oasis of comfort, no matter how deep in the Inferno. That shielding also gives it a distinctive profile: a segmented silhouette like a pearlescent green pillbug, with cilia-esque antennae to disperse radiation. That is, provided you can see it through the gunfire; the *Wretch* is coveted by many, and is frequently under siege.

RATINGS

Dawson’s Inferno has Wealth 2, Might 1, Crime 3, and Tech 0.

SPECIAL RULE

The Inferno itself is a fearsome adversary. When in the Inferno, the GM creates a 6-step “Hazard Protection’ clock for each character, representing their countermeasures against the region’s hazards at both Vehicle and Pilot scale. When this clock is filled, their protection has failed, with appropriate fictional consequences. Relevant Load, Gear, or other preparation may extend this clock or remove it entirely.

RHIZOME

It’s easy to be overtaken by nihilism. The War brings heavy losses and regrets, no matter what side you’re on. You start to wonder why you bother trying to fight at all.

Yet, collectively, we hang on. Somehow. Even in the void of space. LKE-341 has a whole settlement built out of derelicts and detritus, filled with people of different Factions carving out a life for themselves in the wake of their own personal disasters. In that regard, at least, they’re doing better than us here in Izya. It is heartening to think that when they are literally pressed against the emptiness, they are able to find hope.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Within the Steel Meadows exists an arrangement of debris that is purposefully chaotic; a tangle of broken ships, power cables, tow lines, and airlock extensions. It is this near-formless and sprawling tangle that makes up the vast ramshackle space station known as the Rhizome. Many ships towed to the Steel Meadows weren't fully dead, crews still clinging to life. Decades ago, the survivors banded together and through imagination, ingenuity, and pure cussedness they brought the node-based station to life.

SCENE

Handmade blankets cover scored bulkheads, and small children run amidst tangled electrical wires that spill out of every panel. A Jovangellian engineer points out intricacies of ship design to

Norrish and DFS counterparts as they all argue about which direction a new section should be oriented before attachment. Visible through foggy portholes, a Myriad electrician in an ER Inc spacesuit strings emergency lights in the shape of far off constellations. AR memorials flicker in front of sealed airlocks as someone pulls out a guitar, someone else shuffles a deck of cards, and a viewscreen plays Calazar.

NOTABLES

De Dacto, member of Rhizome Response and Repair. A tall, one-eyed, middle-aged woman. As a member of RR&R, she is tasked with rapid response to technological emergencies within the Rhizome. De Dacto's dream is to retrofit the station into a true Rhizome that can even separate and reconfigure as needed, however she needs material that can only be found in newer wrecks. (Arrogant, Inventive)

LANDMARKS

If the Rhizome can be said to have a center, then it is embodied in the Root. A tightly webbed ball of sections from three battleships, it is the seed from which the station grew. As the Rhizome took shape, the Root gradually became it's hydroponics garden, one of the most precious nodes. The gutted walls are covered with trailing vines and no two floor tiles are alike in shape or size, all to cover how only the base superstructures and exterior hulls still exist; the rest long since salvaged to secure other parts of the station.

RATINGS

The Rhizome has Wealth 1, Might 1, Crime 2, Tech 3

SPECIAL RULE

Putting together a space station out of spare parts is a feat of mastery few can accomplish, but the true test of skill is to keep it running. Take +1D to all technology-focused Acquire Asset roles, but this roll will not receive the Crit bonus.

DAMOCLES RESEARCH COMPLEX

A Norrish scientist once told me why he would never go back into space, no matter what the Adamant Council wanted. He’d been on a small deep-space outpost researching gravitational wave communication. One night the evacuation alarm sounded. He and his bunk mate leapt from their beds

and headed to the escape pods. They were the closest, and he got in first. When he turned around, his bunk mate—and everyone else in the corridor—had *merged into the walls.* Screaming, he fired the escape pod.

Outside, peering through the small porthole, he saw that half the outpost had been *inverted*.

I bought the drinks for the rest of the night.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

The military leadership of the DFS established the Damocles Research Complex as a network of research space stations located in an isolated sector of the Steel Meadows system in order to advance their technological might. The DRC was the source of some of the most valuable technology in the galaxy and equipped with a super massive implosion device to ensure that technology never fell into enemy hands.

But one day the DRC suddenly went dark. When relief crews finally arrived they found the complex embroiled in a storm of unpredictable dimensional anomalies that ripped through the DRC stations exposing the interiors to space and killing all its inhabitants. The anomalies prevented any major relief effort and now only the most experienced of Peace Breakers dare venture into the region.

SCENE

Battered Peace Breaker ships float along the edge of the ruined Damocles Research Complex as salvage AWVs jet between them and the wrecked space stations. One AWV flies a little too quickly and doesn't notice an anomaly form in its path. Within seconds the machine is contorted into a twisted bubbling mass of scrap metal. Their fellow scavengers pause for a moment and then promptly return to work.

NOTABLES

Many Peace Breakers attempted to brave the DRC, but most would sooner or later become casualties of the anomalies. But through luck, skill, and determination Marija Grinko managed to thrive, in the deadly ruins of the DRC, and made a name for herself as the foremost expert on the

area. In her old age she no longer delves into the wrecks herself. Instead she puts her years of experience to guide others. (Pragmatic, Experienced)

LANDMARKS

Damocles Central Research Station, colloquially known as the Sword, was the nucleus of the entire complex. All the data in the DRC passed through this one station and here the implosion device was housed. When the anomalies created by the disaster tore into the station, the core structure survived. The databases, prototypes and the implosion device itself remain untouched in the station.

RATINGS

The DRC has Wealth 2, Might 1, Crime 2, and Tech 4

SPECIAL RULE

Dimensional anomalies run rampant through the DRC, threatening to appear and mutilate interlopers at any moment. For every action taken in the DRC add 1 Tick to a 12-clock “Dimensional Distortions.” If the clock fills, an anomaly appears and the position for all pilots immediately worsens.

SOMETHING FOUND IN AN ANCIENT STAR SHIP HULK

If you need an idea for something the Pilots find in an old star ship hulk, roll 2d. If the first die is 1-2, roll on Table A; 3-4 roll on B; 5-6 roll on C. The second die indicates the topic of discussion.

TABLE A

1. A DFS drone corrupted by Overlord and carrying out its orders.
2. A furless deer person scavenging supplies for Shift-home.
3. A white crescent moon inside of a purple circle, the symbol of the Ecliptic Coven, painted on a wall.
4. An active sensor suite that is transmitting its data to somewhere else in the Steel Meadow. It has noticed the Pilots’ activities.
5. A pressurized section of hulk that has been converted into a hydroponics farm and is being maintained by a person with heavy cybernetic augmentation.
6. A few Ecliptic Coven mercenaries in armored EVA suits performing funerary rites for ancient corpses preserved by the vacuum of space.

TABLE B

1. A Child of Saint Marigold floating half dead after they ran afoul of problems during Zero-G training.
2. An explosive device attached to a ship's intact gas line.
3. A page torn from the journal of Saint Hassan.
4. A few Children of Saint Marigold practicing Zero-G breaching maneuvers, possibly into the room the Pilots are in (though the Children are surprised to see them).
5. A remote engine override device of Celestial Myriad make attached to the hulk's thrusters.
6. A few Penitent disassembling a skeleton and storing its pieces in individual pouches.

TABLE C

1. A Peace Breaker beacon attached to a rare component that requires specialized equipment to salvage.
2. An ancient combat log featuring the exploits of the Deliberate.
3. A few agents of the 4th Intelligence Corps checking the hulk's communication logs.
4. A tunnel cut through the length of the hulk that painstakingly avoids hazards.
5. An unexploded missile with markings indicating that it was fired by the Deliberate.
6. A pressurized room converted into an interrogation chamber with a pair of 4th Intelligence Corps agents questioning a restrained member of one of the other active squads.

CALAZCON!

An Uncanny Resemblance

By Malaika Kirkwood

It was a blessing she resembled Marwa. What else could she think when before her kneeled the bloody victors known as the Convention Organizers. Their awe flowing alongside their tears as before them stood the physical copy of their beloved Marwa.

“This is just like episode one-twenty five in season thirty-two where she works at a noodle shop,” said one woman.

“Such a beautiful arc. That a princess like her was willing to go undercover to understand the plight of the common man,” said another.

The man on his knees rose and with a knowing nod added, “Truly the only way for her to refine her ideals and politics. How else to dissuade those nobles taken by Baron Bastartos’ warmongering rhetoric.”

Her brain spun as their “fandom discourse” rolled on without her. It was only minutes ago that she had huddled alongside her fathers. Their hands clenching tighter with each staccato burst of AWV-mounted gunfire. It was so loud that it shook their noodle shop. As evidenced by the shattered frame holding the photo of Her Highness and the Regent General Bellimine.

“I’m telling you, Marwa is undoubtedly best girl—,”

“What’s going to happen to us?” she asked. All eyes turned to her and though her legs shook she stood her ground. The organizers looked to one another for guidance, but it was the man who rose first that spoke.

“Why, you’ll run this shop of course. The convention will be in desperate need of those able to provide food services. Plus, a site like this with one who bears such an uncanny resemblance to Marwa will undoubtedly become a beloved fixture of this year’s CalazCon!” And with that they left. And in thirty minutes the gunfire resumed as the organizers carried out the rest of their evictions with a fervor only a fan could summon.

With the convention in full swing it wasn’t long before word of the resemblance became the talk of CalazCon! In streets, cafes, and retrofitted temples everyone heard about “3D Marwa.” Everyone who liked her—not *her* her but Marwa—flooded the shop and drowned their registers in CalazCon! proprietary scrip. A joy for her family as some in the Jovangellian military saw something like a noodle shop to be nothing but an illegal operation undermining the local rationing effort. A concern that the convention clientele didn’t care a lick about as they slurped down bowl after bowl. Only taking breaks to take selfies with her in the Marwa cosplay her father quickly acquired, discuss which storylines were peak, and what spin-offs lost the proper Calazar spirit. Topics they gleefully educated her on, or re-educated when one client found another’s opinion to be heretical.

While these were her days it was when night descended—and they could clear out the remaining customers—that she took on different duties. Carrying a bag bulging in CalazCon! scrip she visited those neighbors and family left to beg on the street. Block by block it slowly deflated as she redistributed what she could. “We’ll keep everyone fed this way,” her father had said. The justification for their long hours and the demands placed on her by the occupation. Even when the bag had become too heavy to carry and the chill of the night seeped into her bones she trudged on to hand out money to at least one more person. This was the right thing to do. It was what *Marwa* would do.

Down twisted streets and in narrow alleys she warmed herself with the image of the woman the convention attendees had painted for her. Of a girl who could swear off luxury to help who she could. Save who she can. A woman who could swear harsher than any AWV pilot on the topic of the

War, but when faced with those in need of kind words spoke with a honey tongue. While the concept belonged more to those of the Celestial Myriad, she figured that this is what they were talking about when describing a saint. This was the thought that she carried back to bed. Punctuated with the simple thought: *If I already look like her maybe I could be a bit like her, too.*

The problem with such fame was that people would ask her questions. With the aim to not interrupt business too much it was decided she'd host a panel. A decision that saw their modest shop packed far beyond any safety limit. "What do you think of Baron Bastartos?" "How would you have solved the conflict in episode 134 season 32?" "If Marwa was here what would she say about Hestiol?" These were questions she was able to dance through with the least bit of commitment or thought: "He's a man trying to do what he thinks is right. If nothing else isn't that commendable?" "I haven't seen enough of the series to comment," "I think Marwa would love Hestiol even as she'd be sad that it's been the center of battle for so long."

"What truly is the Shape of Peace," asked one customer. They stared at her with a somber intensity. In the lack of an immediate answer she continued, "What government leaves us to be free? None of us want war, but we're told only through war can we achieve the Shape of Peace. But, what are we fighting for?"

"That's an impossible question," some yelled out. The crowd piled boo's atop their fellow. Seeing the fan's head lower, she raised a hand and silenced the entire shop. She said, "Give me a moment. I need to think," and then she had her moment. The Shape of Peace was a concept that Calazar always brought up. It was the ideal form by which The War could end and everyone could live in utopia. A framing as it were for the numerous faction stand-ins to speak their truth. She knew what she was supposed to say as the answer. That the Shape of Peace could only be achieved through the leadership of those willing to carry the burden of governance for those unable or unfit to carry it at all. It's what she had been taught after all as a good citizen of the Jovangellian Empire.

“It might sound silly, but when I stand here looking out at the bar and the tables I can’t help but see *this* as the Shape of Peace.”

“A noodle shop?” asked one bemused customer.

“Yeah,” she said, “I mean, in this shop we have Exoduns, Independents, a few Norrish, those from farther afield and other factions all at peace. I see you slurp down noodles and talk about a show that raised you all on stories that forced you to think. To see your fellows as people even if they do disagree with you. And while you may come to harsh words you don’t come to blows. Now, I can’t say this would work on the scale of planets and systems, but it can work for a neighborhood. From there maybe a city. And we just do our best to scale it higher and higher.”

The restaurant was silent. All of them had stopped slurping to listen to what she had to say and now all of them were lost in thought mulling over the flavor of her words. Yet unbeknownst to them, was a small man in a far off seat who smoldered over every word that left her mouth. The man had snuck past enemy lines to infiltrate this “CalazCon!” to find what allies he could and wage a counter-offensive. It would’ve been the stuff of military legend and likely would’ve seen him gain some sort of medal. But rather than encounter those loyal citizens in bitter need of a hero he found a girl so won over by Exodun propaganda that she became a willing fountain of seditious thought. He fingered the smooth ribbon that “peacebonded” his gun as he mulled over what would come next.

It was during her nightly walk that she found herself alone on a bridge with this very same man. Cloudy as it was, she could barely make out his image but felt something was off. She raised her bag and pointed at it.

“I still have tons of scrip left. How much do you need?” The silhouetted man neither moved toward her nor spoke. Instead he raised his arm in time with a passing cloud that unveiled the light of Hestiol’s double moons. Shining in its darkness was a gun of Jovangellian design. The girl didn’t ask why he pointed it at her. Everyone knew someone or someone who knew someone that found

themselves in this position. And most—like her—found themselves staring down that black cyclopean eye of a barrel for the same dumb reason. They spoke their mind.

She took a deep breath. Lowered the bag to the ground. Then moved to ask one question, “Can I tell my parents—”

Bang.

Her thoughts scattered behind her as she reminisced—for the last time—of how her cousins would tug on her braid, so similar was the pain. Crack. What remained of her skull shattered against the bridge. Her eyes stared up into the sky where a large holographic display advertised: “Marwa in the Flesh!”

In the Jovangellian system of Veranost The War arrived a few months ago when Norrish forces pushed into the Empire's territory. As the conflict depleted the energy and resources of both sides it seemed that the city of Hestiol on the world of Logel would be the site of the decisive battle. The Norrish attackers brought up the AWVs that could be spared from the other theatres of battle. The Jovangellian defenders gathered supplies inside the city while building barricades and traps on its outskirts. Both had forgotten about CalazCon! and that failure would cost them dearly.

The first sign that something was amiss was when the Early Bird ships arrived in system. Fast transports with little ship to ship combat capability, they were largely ignored by the exhausted Norrish and Jovangellian fleets locked in combat maneuvers as the Early Birds didn't attack. Instead they headed straight for Logel making hot landings in and around Hestiol. An orbital assault from a fresh

and dedicated force stole the initiative from the two ground armies that had been preparing to clash. In spite of their losses to two entrenched opponents, the Early Birds quickly established and expanded a beachhead. As the Exodus Republic Incorporated flag was raised alongside several unfamiliar flags, it took a few hours for word to reach the commanders of the entrenched armies that the unknown belligerents had raised the flags of fictional states. As confusion reigned, it quickly dawned on them that CalazCon! had arrived, but by then it was too late to stop it.

If the Jovangellian and Norrish fleets had paid attention to the Early Bird assault craft and arranged a very temporary alliance to stave off the coming threat, they could have won. Instead an ER Inc fleet slightly smaller than the other two combined jumped into the system, making an aggressive push towards Logel. The sudden chaos inflicted heavy damage on all three but the Exodun fleet's mandate was to get planetside and offload its cargo, while the other two's more complex objectives required their ships to be in better condition. Thus the Norrish and Jovangellian fleets limped away from Logel towards whatever repair and resupply stations they had on the edge of the system. It would be months before they would be able to return to the fight and too late because CalazCon! was well under way by then.

Numerous ships and shuttles made planet fall in a surprisingly orderly manner, taking turns using the landing zone established by the Early Birds. The people disembarking were directed deeper into Hestiol by the administration corps that had landed immediately after the Early Birds, and they encountered resistance from the Jovangellians. However, the locals were not prepared for such fresh and zealous combatants, getting pushed deeper and deeper into the city until even the defenders' command post had to withdraw.

The initial fighters were quickly followed by a vast assortment of merchants, exhibitors, panelists, cosplayers, artists, and enthusiasts all here to participate in CalazCon!: the once a year (going by the Calazarian calendar, which is once every 5 years in the common calendar) celebration of the Calazar media franchise. Storefronts were occupied by merchants selling Calazar plushies, porn, games, costumes, recordings, food, and much more. Stages in schools, stadiums, temples, and community centers became home to panels and lectures on topics such as "Subtext: is it real and does it matter?", "Who is best girl: Marwa, Jacob, or Kelly?", and "Why Baron Bastartos should have had a redemption arc." Cafes, street corners, and parks had flocks of fans in costume arguing over whether Marwa would have defeated her parent if they hadn't been weakened by Aarin, and similar topics. Homes and hotels were filled with all of the above looking for a place to sleep, and the vast majority of them were armed.

As CalazCon! intensifies with each new wave of celebrants that arrives the Jovangellians, both civilian and soldier, have been forced into taking guerrilla action against the Calazar fans occupying their city and the Norrish military surrounding it. Meanwhile, the Norrish forces have been put on the back foot as they must reexamine their plans for assaulting Hestiol while also dealing with skirmishes from Calazar fans looking to recreate iconic battles from the series. With both sides wondering why this location was chosen for CalazCon! any fan can tell you that it's because Hestiol shares a name with the city in Calazar: Dreams of a Future Unbroken, Episode 127: Shout! The City Trembles.

What the future holds for the year long (is that a Calazar year or a common year?) celebration of CalazCon! is uncertain, except that those present will never forget the fans' voices cheering "All Glory to Calazar" in unison.

LIST OF SQUADS ACTIVE IN CALAZCON!

AUTOCRACY SQUADS

One of the Jovangellian Empire's greatest strengths is its unity of purpose. No matter where a Jovangellian stands they know that they must work to glorify the Empire and defend it from its numerous foes. If they aren't sure what that glory or those foes look like, there's always someone closer to the throne who can clarify what needs to be done. CalazCon! has shattered that chain of surety.

Even though their leaders have been scattered or killed, the lessons of the Empire are deeply ingrained. The Jovangellians who remain in Hestiol are doing what they can to survive, while also taking many chances to strike back at the occupiers. They strike in any and every direction, creating nuisances and grievances, eking out victories big and small. This is their home, and they WILL outlast the occupiers.

- **The Serpent's Fangs** (Tier III-S Autocracy) is what remains of the military commanders that were defending Hestiol. They still see themselves as in charge of Hestiol's defense, but don't have the strength to actively command the other Jovangellian forces without their consent. GOAL: Reunite the Jovangellian defenders.
- **The Chameleon Rangers** (Tier III-W Autocracy) are veteran covert ops experts with effectively unrestricted access throughout the city and the area surrounding it. Tried to warn The Serpent's Fangs about CalazCon! after the arrival of the Early Birds. GOAL: Defend Hestiol against the Exodun AND Norrish threats.

- **Tempestia** (Tier II-S Autocracy) is the great aunt of Her Highness Cascade herself. She is an ancient and storied warrior that has been retired for decades, but thanks to the machinations of the empire's regent general, she has been called to serve the empire once more. Tempestia's personal AWV, the Noontide Squall, is an iconic vehicle of a bygone age of warfare. Its silhouette can strike fear into those who recognize it, but it's outdated compared to most frontline AWVs currently in active service. GOAL: Survive Regent General Bellimine's schemes and return home with the prestige to oppose them.
- **Rico'n'Co.** (Tier II-W Autocracy) are contract heisters commissioned to steal the famous statue *Imperna Triumphant* from a museum in Hestiol for a Jovangellian noble's personal collection. Tasked with stealing from their own side, it's vital that the theft not be traced back to them or their employer, but the ongoing chaos of CalazCon! will make for a convenient scapegoat to cover their tracks with. GOAL: Steal the *Imperna Triumphant* and blame it on CalazCon!.
- **The Hornets** (Tier I-S Autocracy) are Jovangellian civilians who continue to work for CalazCon! during the occupation so they can keep their access to Hestiol's infrastructure. They use their local knowledge and connections to sting the occupiers in minor and major ways. GOAL: to be a thorn in the side of the Exodun occupiers.
- **The Vermin** (Tier I-W Autocracy) - When Elegy 'King Rat' Daggs' gang busted them out of civil detention in the midst of the Norrish invasion it was expected they'd return to their neighborhood and lay low until a winner emerged. Now, with a second invasion on and their home turned into a glorified panel on the ethics of fandubbing, the Vermin's fast moving hover vehicles and pilfered CALAZCLASH!! Hope Of Calazar recreation (really a modified prototype Mk17 Strafe) make them a reluctant guerrilla force for the authorities that have held them down all these years. GOAL: Secure pardons for peacetime.
- **The Hermit Crabs** (Tier I-W Autocracy) aren't the Calazar fans they appear to be. They know plenty about Calazar, for sure, but that's because they're a specially assembled Jovangellian PR Squad looking to spin fan support for the aristocratic, militaristic Bastartos into fan support for the aristocratic, militaristic Jovangellians. Jovangellian command consider them something of a joke, somebody's pet project given a budget and told to go away – but just like Bastartos' Hidden Battalion, the Crabs are willing to accept ignominy now in order to strike a decisive blow later. GOAL: Turn Calazar fans into Jovangellian soldiers.

CORPORATOCRACY SQUADS

Everyone at CalazCon! is here to be a part of something greater than themselves. They seek community with their fellow fans, accolades from their peers, and attention from their heroes. Having already paid large portions of their earnings to be here, many desperately seek to recoup their losses with fame and wealth won at the convention. Once the show ends, anything and everything gained here can be resold for greater profits to those with substantial resources and FOMO.

- **Early Birds** (Tier III-S Corporatocracy) are the fans who paid extra to be part of the initial landing operation to establish a beachhead in Hestiol. Festooned in lanyards, pins, t-shirts, and other merch from past CalazCon!s, they are the gatekeepers of the fandom. GOAL: To earn all the limited edition swag.
- **CALAZCLASH!!!** (Tier III-S Corporatocracy) - What started as an animation project by creators Artemis Mayflower and Lem Forte has blossomed into the Calazar Fandom's premier AWV fighting spectacle. Boasting a roster of skilled pilots, authentically recreated AWVs, and CalazLore historians to keep perfect show-to-life accuracy CALAZCLASH!!! hopes to make the fourth iteration of 'The Clash!!! At The Con' the stuff of legends (not to mention justify their obscene amount of funding they get from the studio). GOAL: Recover the stolen Hope of Calazar unit in time for the main event three-way fight with GOLIATH and Horizon Blue.
- **501st "Bastards" Division** (Tier II-S Corporatocracy) are fans that constantly wear the uniform of Baron Bastartos' soldiers, unironically shout "Splendorous Bastartos," and rarely break character. GOAL: To exalt Baron Bastartos through skirmishes against the Norrish military.
- **Jacob's Junkers Ltd** (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is the logistics company that won the contract for supplying CalazCon! by uniting a varied group of small time Calazar merchandisers. GOAL: Make it big by completing the contract.
- **Calazarian Artists Association** (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a collective of eclectic fanartists, cosplayers, and performers. Their mostly-genuine adoration for the Calazar media franchise is the perfect cover for the covert wetwork they do for Exodus Republic Incorporated. Beneath the foam swords and fanart commissions are a mixture of Exodus agents trained to blend in as fans and Calazar obsessives bitterly opposed to the recent school of thought that suggests CalazCon! divest itself from corporate sponsorship. Known for taking on missions that require a lighter touch than Calazar Strategic Deployment. Goal: Maintain their cover while protecting Exodus' interests at CalazCon!

- **Darcy d'Amour** (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) is the galaxy-famous voice actor for Tetsuo, one of Calazar's main protagonists, and he's here at CalazCon! to sign autographs, attend panels, and be adored by his fans! While he describes himself as a lover and not a fighter, that doesn't ever seem to stop him when he smells an opportunity to win brownie points by jumping into an AWV. GOAL: Show off in front of his fans and get as much clout as possible.
- **Spencer Holiday** (Tier I-W Corporatocracy) is a Big Name Fan who made his reputation by attaching himself prominently to the right coat-tails and always being near whatever fandom drama seemed most prestigious. He's not above stirring the pot a bit if things seem quiet, and he's not concerned about who gets hit with the fallout – but if you need to know the gossip, the history, the beefs and the hookups, no-one has their finger as firmly on the pulse as Spencer. GOAL: Make everybody love him, by any means necessary.

OLIGARCHY SQUADS

Before the arrival of CalazCon! the Norrish forces were confident that they could take Hestiol. It may have been costly and possibly taken longer than desired, but it had to be done. And it *would* be done.

Now that the situation has been completely twisted in a bizarre way, the Norrish leaders in the area are on the back foot. Their orbital fleet support has retreated, the enemy they'd been preparing for has shattered, and their objective is now occupied by an army(?) with alien ambitions. However, even with all those challenges their ultimate purpose remains unchanged: capture Hestiol.

- **The Silver Flail** (Tier V-S Oligarchy) are taskmasters sent by the Adamant Council to take control of the spiralling situation in Hestiol after repeated failures during the siege. The battle has dragged on and grown overly costly, and the Adamant Council unanimously believes that this is a failing of weak and inept management. The troops clearly require a firmer hand to guide them, and the Silver Flail will provide. GOAL: Gain the unquestioned loyalty of the Norrish army and wage an efficient and well-ordered campaign.
- **The Gallant Guisarme** (Tier IV-W Oligarchy) is the mechanized unit tasked with taking Hestiol. Comprised of several remnant squads gathered from the fighting across Logel, they are still figuring out how to coordinate their strengths and CalazCon! has further confused that process. In spite of the Silver Flail's arrival this squad continues to pursue its objective of taking Hestiol with little regard for the opinions of their "betters." GOAL: Capture Hestiol for the Adamant Council of Nor.

- **The Misericorde** (Tier II-S Oligarchy) consider themselves the most secret of secret police and anyone who could raise a question about their "clandestine methods" were dealt with long ago. After all, sometimes stealth is being too obvious to be taken seriously. Clad in ill-fitting CalazCon! merch, un-swagged attendee badges, military haircuts, and sturdy boots, this group of infiltrators barely pass as Calazar fans. Under the beleaguered gaze of the scattered Jovangellian forces and surrounded by the occupation of CalazCon!, they are barely noticeable. GOAL: Enter Hestiol and eliminate the Jovangellian leadership on planet.
- **The Silent Saps** (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are a squad of social infiltrators specializing in weakening cities during sieges. After entering occupied Hestiol many have regretfully discovered they are now Calazar fans. GOAL: Execute their orders without hurting the fandom.
- **The Paragons in Pearl** (II-W, Oligarchy) consists of nobles willing to pay exorbitant sums for the privilege of “escorted tours of duty” in the most prestigious theaters of conflict. It’s a win-win: they gain greater prestige in court, *and* they get a thrilling holiday experience for the noble who has everything. Their similarity to their Exodun foes in this conflict hasn’t occurred to most of them; those to which it has consider the Exodun version of this practice incredibly gauche and tasteless. GOAL: Look maximally cool, with minimal risk.
- **The Pay Day Gang** (Tier II-W Oligarchy): A notorious mercenary company led by the impishly-minded Rikea “Winner Winner” Korveau, The Gang was contracted by the Adamant Council to supplement their invasion forces. The advent of CalazCon! has brought to light the fact the group was named after the bumbling villains of Calazar Jr. SD Ultra Squad, forcing the lot of them to dodge bullets from hardcore fans angry at being reminded of ‘kiddy garbage’ while also desperately avoiding Calazar’s ever-diligent legal department. GOAL: Get off this rock alive and financially solvent.
- **Leddy Elreth** (Tier I-S Oligarchy) is, much to her chagrin, an ace pilot. She earned this honor while defending herself from those seeking to kill her much better known (and better connected) distant cousin. She pilots a completely normal, if frequently rebuilt, Iron Star she’s started calling Patches. GOAL: Survive the duellists that mistakenly seek her out.

ARTISTS’ ALLEY

We’ve all had our fair share of nightmares in The War, but the images I’m looking at now are something else entirely. Hundreds of people displaced for… art? If you can call it that. Bizarre murals of unreal AWVs with nonexistent flags and too-handsome pilots. *Calazar*. I recall watching some of the series as a child, but it didn’t hold my interest.

Amherst just walked by and said, “Oh, hey, is that GOLIATH?” He pointed at what looks to be an illustration of a massive mobile weapons platform. “I love that thing! What a great illustration.” This has led to Julia hurling a string of choice words at him. The man’s going to get himself killed one day.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Lee’s Folly used to be a nondescript part of town, a little run-down after Salad Foods moved their primary factory and office into orbit but looking set to recover as the residents found work elsewhere.

The Calazarian Artists’ Association were having none of that. Their rapid deployment displaced the people and businesses from Lee’s Folly. Anything useful or valuable was seized; everything else was destroyed or repurposed to make way for artists, art, and art supplies. Now ‘Artists’ Alley’ is a stylish, bohemian neighbourhood – or a filthy sinkhole of perversion, depending on who you ask and where you're standing – riddled with decades-long grudges and feuds. The few remaining locals creep around trying to recover their belongings, or work for the artists directly in the ruins of their previous homes.

SCENE

Two artists loudly belittle each other’s work and character in front of a fountain damaged by automatic weapon fire. An AWV, weapons prominently peace-bonded, kneels so someone can paint The Free Flyer onto its forearm plates. A family sit in the sunshine outside their old home, sewing covers for the body pillow store that now occupies it.

NOTABLES

Renee Standingstone is painting a huge mural of the entire Calazar main-timeline cast on the side of the old Salad Foods factory. She faces some opposition from fans who favour other timelines, and when people find out that she’s snuck her OCs in as well there’s going to be hell to pay. (Focused, naïve.)

LANDMARKS

The old Salad Foods factory is the biggest building in Artists' Alley and its open-plan interior has become a combination gallery and marketplace, especially for those artists whose primary work is large and physical. AR apps still offer guidance for how to operate machinery long-since destroyed, removed, or stripped for parts; a few have been included in installation or performance pieces, while others have been hacked and edited to advertise for nearby sellers.

RATINGS

Artists' Alley has Wealth 1, Might 1, Crime 2, and Tech 0.

SPECIAL RULE

Start a six-tick clock when you first make yourselves known in Artists' Alley: 'Fandom Heroes'. Tick the clock whenever you stand up for art, artists, or Artists' Alley in particular. When it's full, you'll find you and your vehicles appearing in fanart, slightly modified for use as OCs, the subject of custom model kits, and otherwise blended into the Calazar fandom.

ZIRE PARK

Julia grew up in Zire Park, and has expressed no small amount of civic pride in their apparent resistance to the encroaching madness of CalazCon!. Unfortunately the conflict has taken a toll, and the apartments are overcrowded with refugees from the rest of Hestiol.

The scene itself is all-too-familiar. Whatever the reason behind it, this is what war does. Would there be any tangible difference if the Norrish were successful in pressing into the town? But I can't deny there's something that gnaws at the soul knowing all of this is happening because of some show people would watch as children.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Situated in the Northeast end of Hestiol, several blocks of apartment buildings known collectively as Zire Park have been completely overrun by residents from elsewhere in the city in the wake of the invasion of Calazar fans. As it stands, the neighborhood is an island in the sea of CalazCon! attendees overwhelming the rest of the city due to random chance; Zire Park itself has not

yet appeared in Calazar. Now cut off from the rest of the city and with little faith in rescue from Jovangellian forces, the people of Hestiol have built barricades to keep CalazCon! out. Life in Zire Park proceeds mostly as normal, albeit with the ever-present dread of the convention outside looming over everyone.

SCENE

School teachers and factory workers pile mass-produced furniture and heirloom antiques atop a line of groundcars in the street, the lowest levels covered in street art. Refugees sleep packed on every available surface in every apartment like a dark mirror of CalazCon! attendees, some lying awake furtively watching holoscreens fearing even the barest frame of Zire Park put to broadcast. A teary couple watches a popular streamer raid their apartment as a 'prank', broadcast live. Children play in courtyards, imitating the show everyone seems to be watching as well as the fighting going on to the Southwest.

NOTABLES

Cry Havoc has been a pillar of the community of Zire Park for decades. Ze are a short, dark-skinned person with a wry smile. Ze wants zer community to weather the storm and to that end ze has personally organized and led dozens of supply runs to restock Big Store. Ze have been avoiding CalazCon! security easily so far, but ze knows that unless something changes, it is only a matter of time until zer raids are caught. (Determined, mischievous)

LANDMARKS

The local grocery store has an official name, but locals call it Big Store because it's in a big building. Big Store carries everything from apples to replacement battery cores for ground vehicles and the General Manager Split Second has declared that they will keep the doors open, the lights on, the shelves stocked, and prices low by any means necessary. No refunds!

RATINGS

Zire Park has Wealth 2, Might 2, Crime 4, Tech 1

SPECIAL RULE

Zire Park is absolutely packed with people from all over Hestiol. Prowl rolls in this region gain +1D, however Hunt rolls take -1D due to overcrowding.

HALL H

Tower would love this. Not the conflict itself—they were always the most reluctant of anyone in the Cenotaph to engage in combat—but the spectacle. The crowds gathered around these exhibitions are clearly thrilled to be there. There's people milling about in various colorful uniforms, plenty of on-screen entertainment, and even some series of lectures? Amherst says they're called "panels".

Did they have to ruin an entire park to do this, though? And I can only imagine how their officers find a way to manage all this chaos. Yet somehow it is working—both the Jovangellians and the Norrish are struggling.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Previously Hestiol's largest public park, the advent of CalazCon! has transformed this large greenspace into the world's largest convention stage by cutting down a few (hundred) trees and planting viewscreens every fifty feet. Hall H has traditionally hosted the most anticipated panels and attendees used to camp outside or even squat in the room itself to stake their claim on a piece of CalazCon! history. This year, organizers believe they have found the solution to all their problems; no one needs to camp out if the room is big enough! (Hall H attendance ticket still required)

SCENE

Cheering crowds watch as actors, writers, artists, and special guests fool around on stage, answer questions, or reveal juicy backstage gossip. Armed security ignores viewscreens around the reclaimed park rebroadcasting the spectacle, seeking instead any Hestiol resistance or worse: an attendee without a Hall H ticket. Throughout Hall H, CalazCon! attendees sit on folding chairs, picnic blankets, or anything looted from the city around them.

NOTABLES

Belladonna Rosebloom is the frazzled programming and stage manager of Hall H. She is tall, middle-aged, with long frizzy hair escaping from a bun. Her job is to make sure that events happen on schedule on stage and no attendee, no guest, and certainly no Jovangellian defender is going to stop her. (Anxious, stern)

LANDMARKS

The Main Stage is the centerpoint of Hall H and all eyes are on it. Placed over a small war memorial for the people of Hestiol, the stage is staggeringly huge, perhaps even big enough to play a ball game on, or recreate an episode of Calazar. Multiple tables cover the stage, each with microphones placed at regular intervals to pick up a presenter's every word. The back of the stage is shadowed by the mass of a giant viewscreen that presenters can show anything from Calazar clips and concept art to silly backstage photos.

RATINGS

Hall H has Wealth 4, Might 3, Crime 2, Tech 3

SPECIAL RULE

Hall H is the biggest stage at CalazCon! for a reason; this is where the biggest stars put on a show. Start an 8-step clock labelled "Big Ticket Panel". Add one tick after every roll made in this region, when the clock fills a new panel begins on the main stage and all Pilots present take the level 1 harm "Riveted". This can be resisted.

NORRISH SIEGELINE

It is bizarrely comforting to hear that, in the midst of all the chaos, there is still a place where people are killing each other for familiar, sensible reasons. Scattered reports detail the continuing Norrish attempt to enter Hestiol. They’re not called the Adamant Council for nothing.

They’ve met heavy resistance from CalazCon!, however. I’m sure they’re even more confused than the Hestiol residents, given Nor’s inclination to decorum. Part of me can’t help but wish the bastards some luck, but rumor has it that Lady Elreth is somewhere among the Norrish forces, so I don’t expect them to have too much trouble with the defenders.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

The Dafnid Manufacturing Complex on Hestiol’s outskirts is a sprawling industrial park, bisected by a wide river carrying runoff from the refineries that line its banks. Pipes, smokestacks and scaffolds spiderwebbed with catwalks form an erratic skyline. Amongst these are tight, right-angle

corridors just big enough for a mid-sized AWV. Drab administrative shacks turn their lights automatically on at sunset.

Early in the Norrish invasion, Jovangellian forces staged a defense here with Anti-Air gun emplacements. When *CalazCon!* arrived, the defenders were overwhelmed by the addition of a second battlefront, and Nor advanced into Dafnid as far as the river - which they found their vehicles unable to cross without suffering severe corrosive damage. *CalazCon!* cosplayers of the '501st Bastards' LARP Division then swiftly adopted the broken Jovangellian defensive line as their own, successfully holding the six bridges, and preventing a Norrish crossing.

This stalemate between Nor and zealous convention attendants, each in control of Jovangellian AA guns, forms the Norrish Siegeline.

SCENE

A pollutant repels water vapor in the atmosphere, rendering the night sky a crystal clear window to the innumerable stars, while the factories' amber safety lights illuminate nothing but themselves.

Cheerful AR ads for *CalazCon!,* carried in commercial trojans aboard the cosplayers' AWVs, have spread across the chromatic river to the Norrish side, sharing space with hazardous chemical warnings. Weary Norrish soldiers socialize around rations and barrel-fires in converted parking lots. Garishly costumed hobby pilots jovially compare custom paint jobs, armor sculpts, and kill counts. Behind a brambled hill, a food truck prepares to run the blockade with a full complement of energy drinks.

NOTABLES

Acting Commander Antonia Pi, an unassuming Norrish soldier who took charge when the CO was struck by *CalazCon!* brand ordinance. Her decisive push won half the industrial park while her prudence minimized losses. She's been instructed to await a superior officer. (Approachable, judicious, patriotic)

LANDMARKS

Presiding over all, in the center of the action yet somehow still standing, is a 200 ft tall, 15 ft wide, vivid green old-growth cactus known to locals as "Isaac." It has survived industrial development, toxic pollution and, now, armored warfare. Whether the cactus is impossibly tough or merely improbably lucky is a matter of debate.

Legal Note: Isaac currently has a DECA* Desistance claim filed against it, on behalf of the Calazar franchise over the use of the name, though this is only recognized in Exodus jurisdiction. (*Digital Eternity Copyright Act)

RATINGS

The Norrish Siegelines have Wealth 0, Might 4, Crime 0, and Tech 3.

SPECIAL RULE

Vehicle Action rolls involving flight draw immediate, heavy, focused fire, inflicting Level 3 Damage "Wing-Clipped" regardless of the roll's outcome in addition to normal Consequences. Light Vehicles avoid this Damage on a 6 or better. "Wing-Clipped" may be resisted as normal.

KALEIDOSCOPING SEAFOAM

While CalazCon! is something of its own entity, the fanatical armada still has close ties to Exodus Republic Incorporated. The Myriad may have betrayed me, but I don't think Exodus has many principles to speak of when it comes to filling their coffers. They'd kill you just to save a line item in their budget.

This "Save the Seas" campaign of theirs is transparent, even considering that everyone is lied to when it comes to the motivations for a war. This dome that CalazCon! is constructing is another gauche distraction for a group already inundated by spectacle.

I still have to confess: the scale is nothing short of impressive.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

The celebration of CalazCon! has been well underway for a few days now as throngs of fans explore and take in the sites and entertainment of Hestiol. Work is done behind the scenes around the clock to create the various festivities for the upcoming days. Cargo labeled with holo 'Save the Seas by Creating an Oceanic Economy!' marketing stickers are offloaded and distributed into the city for merchants. Aquatic plushes and seafood vendors delight and feed the crowds between entertainment.

Banners of blue and greens with holo images of speakers, acts, and aquatic species hang from various buildings. This year's theme? Aquatic Kaleidoscopes. Supposedly to help raise awareness of

endangered species in various systems though mostly to line the pockets of those who helped ‘sponsor’ different festivities during CalazCon! Even a large dome is being erected over part of the art gallery claiming that the band, Oil Slickers thought of the idea of performing beneath an oceanic top “rad and new.”

The dome CalazCon! is currently installing for the underwater performance is being placed over the top of the Hestiol Star exhibit of the art gallery. The specialized dome has several layers to it, the first to house the concert while the other layers are filled with water and robotic fish to make it seem that the guests are truly underwater. Fog machines and lights dance like holo bubbles on the underside as they prep for the show. There are even rumors of a surprise during the performance though the equipment they are installing seems heftier and more tech savvy then what is needed. Even the security seems more heavily armed. Something is off and you should find out what.

SCENE

The sounds of sun kissed waves greets your ears as you enter the aqua dome. Speakers are hidden throughout the space placed as false rocks. Holo infomercials tell the story of various oceanic species you can sponsor through a donation speak as you approach the stage. The floor is covered in synthetic sand of varying colors all radiating outwards from the meteor at it’s center. There is even an oxygen bar where you can smell the oceans of a thousand systems as you enjoy the star exhibit and donation speeches until the Oil Slickers performance being held later tonight.

NOTABLES

Mayor Rex Nevermore runs the city of Hestiol and appears for all sense and purposes a well respected mayor. Having inherited the position from his father before him, his stance on the local economics has made Hestiol prosper even during the recent political upheavals. What does he know that the rest do not? (Friendly, Cunning, Keeper of Secrets)

LANDMARKS

Hestiol’s art gallery is one of the many landmarks it’s citizens pride themselves in. It houses many installations by unique and famous artists, some of whom only house their art in Hestiol’s gallery. In it’s many halls they also have historical pieces such as signed baseballs or the jeans Kenith Garth was said to have worn during the city’s founding. Many scholars of which have provided their theses to document the rarities.

The Hestiol Star is one of the exhibits in the art gallery and one of the most revered stories of its citizens. It tells the tale of a meteorite that landed outside the old city hall during the formation of the city's coalition, burning with a fire that never went out. A signal that what was formed that day could never be broken. The art gallery was eventually built around that sacred ground, the meteorite star still burning to this day for all visitors to see. Rumors say that some can see a figure in its flames.

RATINGS

Kaleidoscoping Seafoam has Wealth 2, Might 2, Crime 1, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Hestiol was a bustling center of commerce and is currently bursting at the seams with CalazCon! being well underway. Gain +1d to acquiring asset rolls but -1d to any gather information rolls seeking information not about CalazCon! as the entire area is all about the festivities.

THE CALAZAR UNIVERSE REALITY SELF-INSERT EXPERIENCE (CURSE)

My bewilderment aside, I can't deny that the CalazCon! "attendees" are a formidable force. Successfully launching a full-scale invasion, occupying a city, and fighting a battle on two fronts while doing so is a damn-near miraculous military achievement. All this from a group of people to whom war appears to be a hobby. Watching and dissecting hundreds of hours of fictional battles, they've managed to train themselves into a terrifying and elite army.

Small wonder that a former military simulation center commands such attention from their fans. Training wrapped in the guise of foiling Baron Bastartos' 3rd Offensive. The Factions wish they could harness such loyalty.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

When three aspiring tech entrepreneurs and Calazar fans saw an immersive AR training suite at a military surplus auction, they knew what they had to do. They bought it cheap and, in five days of crunch, caffeine, and unpaid internships, reprogrammed it so that CalazCon! initiates could learn from the legendary clashes of their favourite franchise. Did it matter that some of the old military data simply refused to be deleted? That their sole QA tester abruptly quit two days into the job? That when they

told their military friends about their business venture, they jokingly said, ‘Oh yeah, the haunted AR kit? No, seriously, don’t touch that’? Of course it mattered to them, they said. Of course they were deeply concerned, they told themselves, as they installed the suite in what was formerly the Hestiol University campus. But in the end, they agreed, there was money to be made.

SCENE

A squad of trainees flounders in confusion as non-canon-compliant artillery munitions descend upon them. An Exodun lieutenant in last century’s uniform and a bit character argue over how to execute a flanking maneuver, unaware they’re talking about two different battles. A conventiongoer shouts for his friend, who marches away in a Norrish platoon, unresponsive.

NOTABLES

A proxy recreation of Major Hollis Wiscombe, who led the Exodus Republic into one of its most humiliating defeats. Every day, the proxy Wiscombe reenacts his notorious tactical blunder, then fields questions regarding military tactics. As such, he’s a regular fixture in The Lobby, and a mentor to many. However, his recent reenactments have gone awry, as the new Calazar programming bleeds into his code. This has unsettled Wiscombe’s routines, bringing him close to a startling concept: could he use the Calazar arrivals to defy the CURSE, and be victorious in his doomed battle? (Paternal, tired.)

LANDMARKS

The Lobby, an interstitial AR space where CalazCon! attendees can customise their AR appearance, find friends, and select simulations. Physically situated in the university’s looming crystal atrium, reflections dancing across the glass, screens advertising cosmetics, promotions, and unlockables projected on windows that have long since been shattered.

RATINGS

The CURSE has Wealth 1, Might 2, Crime 1, and Tech 3.

SPECIAL RULE

The CURSE is a tenuous string of code, pliable, but dangerous. Interface and Scan actions have increased Effect. Each time one of these actions is rolled, or as a consequence, mark a 4-clock for ‘Scene Change’. When this fills, the CURSE performs a glitchy realignment of its scenarios, and

the squad's relationship to them. To reflect this, reroll the squad's engagement roll (with the same total dice as the original). The changes made by the CURSE cause their Position to immediately change to reflect this new result. The clock then resets.

HESTIOL STORM DRAIN COMPLEX

Before the Hyenas were a Jovangellian strike force in Izya, they were a youth gang in Hestiol. While I was preaching Myriad doctrine in Hulinton, Julia was spending some of her time in the storm drains of her hometown getting into all kinds of trouble. So she's taken it as a personal affront that the convention goers have made a battlefield out of her old stomping grounds, yet another place to reenact their fantasies in the real world.

She did say, rather cryptically, that she hopes "the Yogg will get them". I admit I'm afraid to ask her to elaborate, given the mood she's in.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

Hestiol's Storm Drains were originally built to protect it from floodwaters and torrential rain. Thanks to the unsophisticated security systems of the time, it quickly became a haven for ne'er-do-wells of all stripes with enough stealth, diving equipment and sense of direction to navigate the perilous maze. The Norrish invasion forced an improvement to this security, but neither the law-breakers nor law-makers could have predicted the interest CalazCon! attendees would take in the area owing to its uncanny resemblance to The Ruins of Al-Gonith, a key setting for Calazar: Battle For A Lost History: Season 33.

SCENE

A group of shifty individuals throw packages from a cellar up through a manhole, eyeing both the rain starting to fall above them and the gang of armed Calazar LARPers heading their way. Distantly ahead, the headlamp of a Jovangellian officer illuminates his weary squad as they carry out their patrol. In the depths, something swims away from the water's surface.

NOTABLES

Doctor Logan Suddenly, a university lecturer moonlighting as a cryptozoologist. His round features and timid demeanour have him mistaken for a student, but behind his smeared spectacles he holds a more extensive knowledge of the Storm Drains than anyone else in the city, partly due to his access to official blueprints and partly due to his countless hours spelunking. The recent influx of hostile bodies has him on edge and concerned for the safety of the hypothetical fauna. (enthusiastic, anxious)

LANDMARKS

Drainage Chute A-23, also known as the Plunge Pool, is a central concrete chamber representing the widest open space in the Storm Drains. Large enough to swallow an entire squadron of AWVs, which it's rumoured to have done, virtually everything washed down from above will pass through it eventually. Its key position ensures anyone travelling significant stretches below ground will pass through it too, whether that is horizontally across the metal walkways spanning its diameter or vertically through the water to drain entrances and exits.

RATINGS

The Hestiol Storm Drains have Wealth 1, Might 3, Crime 4, and Tech 0.

SPECIAL RULE

Before beginning Gather Information, roll 1d. On a 1-3, rainwater flows through the tunnels, while on a 4-6 the Storm Drains have done their job and left the complex dry enough for regular locomotion. When wet, take a +1d to engagement rolls made for Stealth, Deception and Scientific missions and -1d to Social, Transport and Assault. When dry, the opposite is true.

PRAXIAN PLAZA

Every army needs a command center, and as far as I can gather from the intel, Praxian Plaza is where CalazCon! decides who is best girl… so to speak. Like most things coming out of the conflict, it is a monument to excess, or will be once construction is completed. There seem to be some hangups on that front, which is odd considering how untroubled CalazCon! appears to be about the two military forces both surrounding and surrounded by them. I'm sure some internecine conflict over the Grand Divider has caused delays.

I need to step away before this rots my brain.

—Harrow Gray, personal log

DESCRIPTION

A residential city block requisitioned by Jacob's Junkers to be the beating heart of CalazCon! The entire block has been flattened to make way for a Calazar-themed convention center that the Junkers have sprung up almost overnight. But the Junkers neglected to negotiate with the people actually living there before tearing down their homes, so there is significant unrest in the area as former tenants resist the construction project.

SCENE

Concrete pillars cast long shadows across the flattened lot at sunset. Humid, stuffy prefab offices are filled beyond capacity with corporate suits that spend their days buried in paperwork. At the back entrance, a large crowd of protestors impedes the progress of a crane trying to enter the facility.

NOTABLES

Jaxon Furl, a lieutenant of Jacob's Junkers, runs the construction project at Praxian Plaza. He was chosen to lead the project thanks to a reputation as a doer that abhors red tape. The breakneck pace of the project, as well as its constant setbacks, have worn him down and thinned his patience. (Decisive, impatient.)

LANDMARKS

Praxian Plaza's centerpiece is the convention center itself. All four floors of the building's support structure have been completed, and work is rapidly proceeding on the interior of the first floor. The entire city block is walled off with a back entrance for construction crews and a front gate that is composed of half-scale renditions of famous Calazar AWVs, the top arch of the gate formed by the clashing beam swords of the two centermost AWVs. The east side of the lot is filled with a row of prefab offices that are the temporary residence for all Jacob's Junkers staff and affiliated parties working on the project.

RATINGS

Praxian Plaza has Wealth 3, Might 2, Crime 3, and Tech 1.

SPECIAL RULE

From citizens of Hestiol to actual military outfits, there are numerous parties that don't want Praxian Plaza to be completed. When you roll engagement in this region, make a separate 1d roll to determine a third party that is currently working in the region with intent to sabotage the construction. The third party doesn't necessarily have to resort to violence — disruption and espionage are equally valid methods.

1. Silent Saps operatives
2. A single vigilante AWV pilot
3. Jovangellian marines
4. A crowd of armed protestors
5. A crowd of unarmed protestors
6. Micromanaging company executives

OVERHEARD CALAZCON! FAN ARGUMENTS

If you need an idea for an argument between Calazar fans or a topic for a lecture or panel, roll 2d. If the first die is 1-2, roll on Table A; 3-4 roll on B; 5-6 roll on C. The second die indicates the topic of discussion.

TABLE A

1. Subtext: is it real and does it matter?
2. Who is best girl: Marwa, Jacob, or Kelly?
3. Why Baron Bastartos should have had a redemption arc.
4. Marwa couldn't have defeated her parent if Aarin hadn't weakened them.
5. Is it moral to be a fan of Onimot?
6. Was Zhao secretly a Praxian?

TABLE B

1. Why didn't Trolkim use the Grand Divider from the side stories to solve the third Vollet Threat?
2. How The Praxis Shock disproves the DFS Ethos.
3. There's no way a newbie like Aarin could defeat Onimot!

4. The Blue-Orange Alliance should've just used the Bastartos Maneuver to win!
5. Kelly is an unrealistic character because their skills came out of nowhere!
6. Calazar: A Time For Glory 7th edition is better than 9th edition.

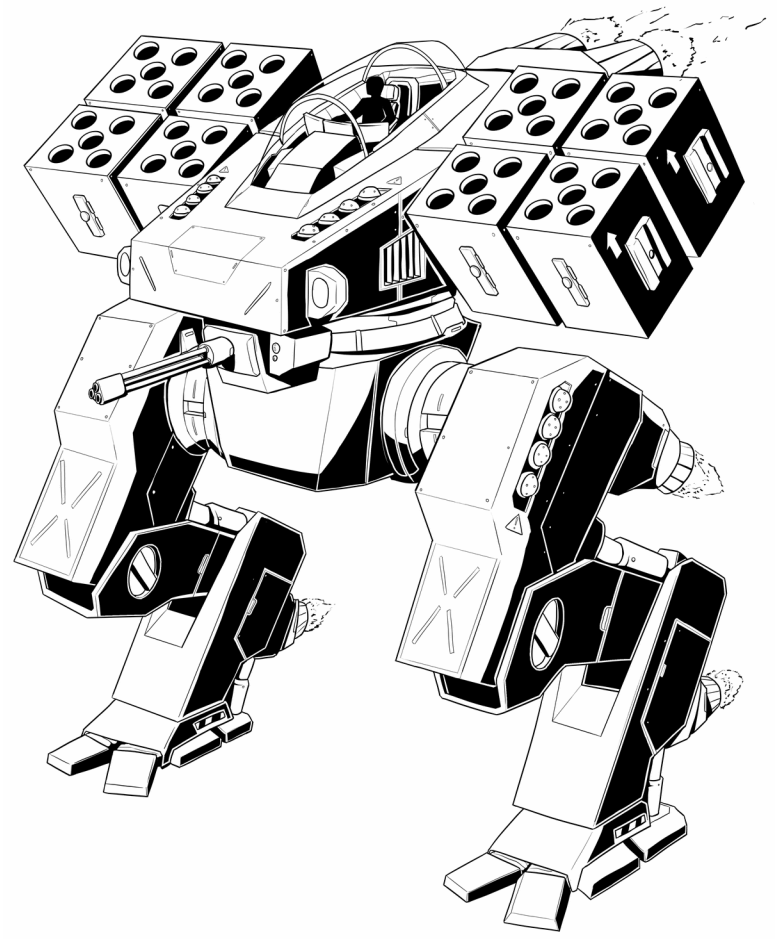
TABLE C

1. If the Free Flyer is a pro-Myriad symbol, why is it all over the promotional material?
2. Who would win in a fight: a Strafe MK16 or the Centre Interceptor?
3. Does Jacob like pineapple on his pizza?
4. Why the live action adaptations are better than the comics, cartoons, or novels.
5. Calazar is NOT a fictionalized version of the Exodus!
6. The Lone Soul was actually a force for good, pushing Calazar to Glory!

EXAMPLE VEHICLES

ARMORED WALKING VEHICLE SPECIFICATION GUIDE

Players may use the following examples as ideas for their vehicle, and GMs may use them as inspiration for NPC vehicles. While these examples list intended Load and action ratings, these are just suggestions. Similarly, NPCs vehicles don’t use the rules for Light, Medium, or Heavy, they’re a shorthand for how the vehicle looks and behaves narratively.



MODEL: Crab

Manufacturer: Whittaker Fine Goods Company

Faction: Autocracy, the Jovangellian Empire

Role: Vanguard combatant. It deals with varied threats where the fighting is thickest.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: Bio-generated plasma thrower, heavy crushing claw, nimble scythe arms, thick carapace.

Action Points: 1 Battle, 2 Bombard

Appearance: The entire creature is covered in thick plates of carapace, with an especially heavy plate on the back of the torso and hips. 2 pairs of arms sprout from the heavily armored torso. The upper pair are much larger, being as thick as the creature's thighs, and reaching down to its shins. One of these large arms ends in a heavy crushing claw, while the other ends in a smaller claw designed for manipulating the bio-plasma generated in the forearm. The lower arms are more proportional, but instead of hands it has forearm length scythes. Its stout legs are human shaped ending in a feet that have 2 thick toes and an elevated heel. A second pair of stabilizing "legs" can unfurl from underneath the hip shell, giving the plasma thrower a surprising amount of range and accuracy when needed. The almost disc shaped head has 4 deeply recessed eyes along the front edge. Just below them is a mouth surrounded by 6 facial manipulators, each ending in a curved blade the length of a human adult's forearm.

Suggested Quirks: Heavy Carapace, Armored Eyes, Asymmetric Build, Weaponized Hands.

MODEL: Coyote

Manufacturer: Jovan Imperial Shipyards

Faction: Autocracy, the Jovangellian Empire

Role: Mobile artillery. Fires indirectly on targets, then quickly redeploys.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: A rack of missiles, dash boosters, shrapnel defense pods, chin mounted machine gun.

Action Points: 2 Bombard, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: A sharply angled torso with a clear cockpit bubble instead of a head to provide clear vision for the pilot. Digitigrade legs provide both stability and mobility at the cost of armor. Boosters adorn the back of the torso and the back of the legs for bursts of speed. The missile pods are mounted directly on the sides of the torso which provides excellent accuracy but reduces the horizontal angle of firing. This is offset somewhat by a machine gun mounted underneath the cockpit on a turret.

Suggested Quirks: Low and Bipedal, Optical Cockpit, Non-Directional Hardpoints, Small Footprint.

MODEL: Sculptor

Manufacturer: Spirit Forge Cloister

Faction: Theocracy, the Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Hit & Run. Using its unnatural agility and movement, it strikes to distract from slower targets and to make opportunistic attacks.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Powerful hands, ceramic armor, coiled musculature.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: While it has a humanoid shape when walking on two limbs, its flexible joints allow it to easily move like both a spider and a wolf as needed. The manipulators at the end of each limb have the power to crush AWV armor and the grace to rewire their internals. The gold filigree and blue floral embellishments across its starkly white ceramic exterior make it distracting for many combatants.

Suggested Quirks: Distractingly Ornate, Unnerving Movement, Flexible Joints, Crushing Grasp

MODEL: Arquebusier

Manufacturer: The Order of Teasdale

Faction: Theocracy, the Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Line of battle AWV. The simple construction makes field repairs relatively easy (a rarity in Myriad AWVs)

Intended Load: Medium

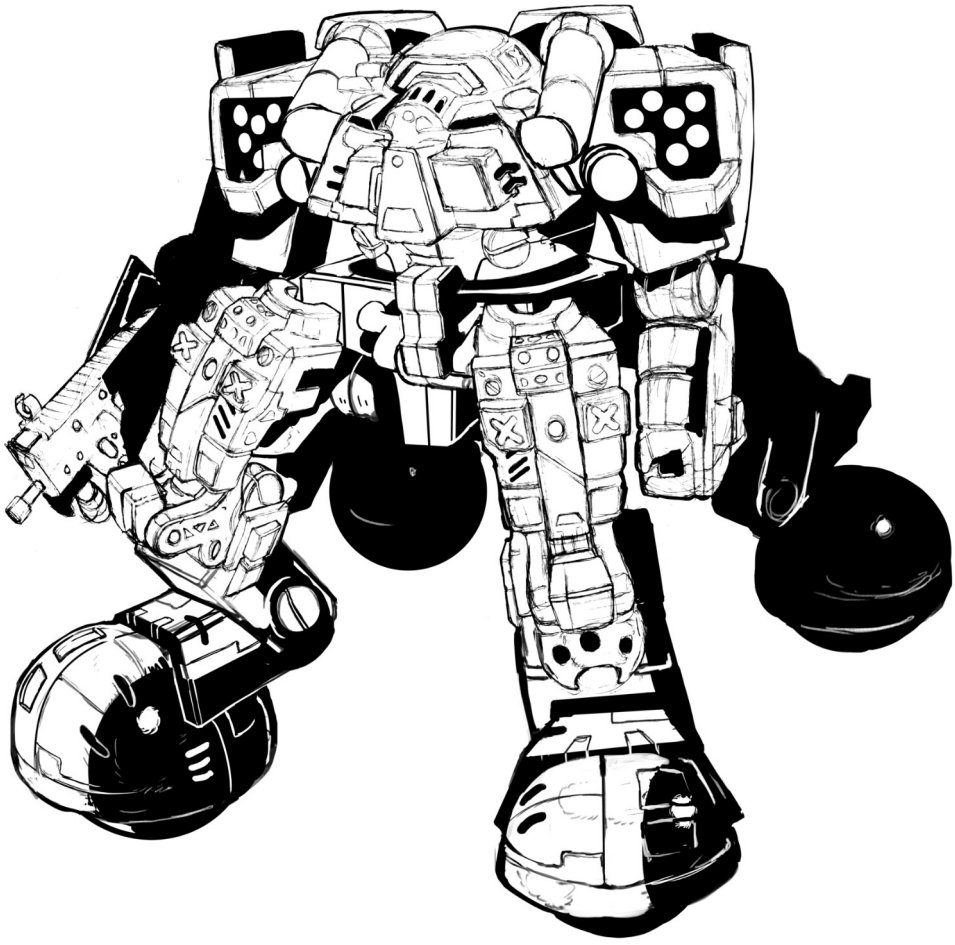
Standard Loadout: Pair of wrist mounted gatling guns, an armored shell, and back mounted jump jets.

Action Points: 1 Battle, 1 Maneuver, 1 Manipulate.

Appearance: This AWV has a hunched form with an ovoid head that sticks out in front of its bulky torso. Numerous boosters point down from under the shelf of its armored back. Wrapped around its skeletal arms and humanoid hands are wrist mounted gatling guns, the barrels encircling the entire

forearms. Its humanoid legs are also armored and provide a good blend of stability, agility, and protection. A common variant discards the armor in favor of greatly increased mobility.

Suggested Quirks: Hunched Figure, Military Workhorse, Simple Construction, Resilient Design



MODEL: VERSION 0.9T(ransformed)

Manufacturer: Sapperson Inc. Research & Development

Faction: Corporatocracy, Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Shock Trooper. V0.9T is meant to move within striking distance as a human, and then transform and wreak havoc.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Razor claws, psionic energy beam, bone armor, psionic forcefield

Action Points: 1 Scan, 1 Battle, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: The smooth upper head is devoid of eyes and ears, which doesn't impede it. Its lower jaw is wrapped in bone armor, while its mouth is full of massive human teeth. Most of its body is raw powerful muscles, with more bone plates across the torso and raptorial legs. Its feet are two toed, ending in deadly claws, while its hands have 3 thick clawed fingers, including thumb, that are the product of fingers fusing together. Strangely, the creature reproduces its shackles and binding rivets every time it transforms.

Suggested Quirks: Thick Hide, Experimental Subject, Coiled Muscle, Eyeless Sight

MODEL: Brace MK 8

Manufacturer: Aileron Omnidynamics

Faction: Corporatocracy, Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Rapid Redeployment. Kept in reserve to reinforce spots where the line of battle is faltering.

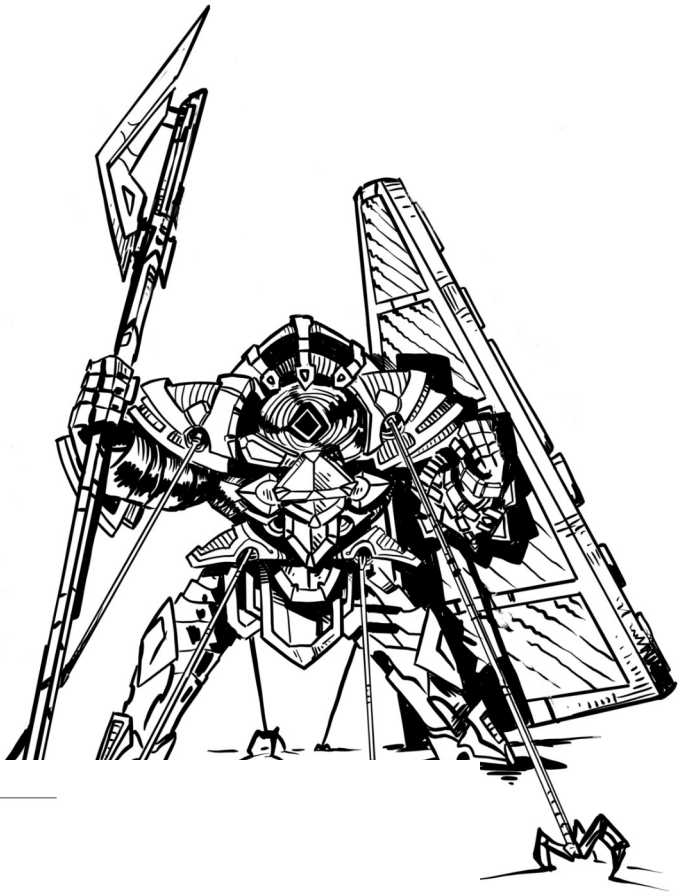
Intended Load: Heavy

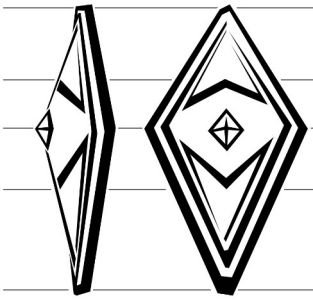
Standard Loadout: Quad sphere wheel legs, reactive armor plating, bullpup machine gun, shoulder mounted rocket pods.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: The wedge shaped torso of this headless AWV is mounted on 4 armored legs arrayed in an X. The legs end in Aileron Omnidynamics proprietary sphere wheels that give it great mobility in any direction, but the legs themselves are more than just a suspension system, which allows it to walk

over broken terrain. The humanoid arms and hands are an unremarkable design, but allow it to carry a wide variety of weapons (most commonly a bullpup machine gun, and shoulder mounted rocket pods).
Suggested Quirks: Overly Stable, Threatening Reputation, Variable Height, 360 Degree Movement





MODEL: Chakram

Manufacturer: 22nd Research Corps

Faction: Democracy, Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Ambusher. By leveraging its ability to hide among infantry while in pilot form, it surprises enemy forces expecting a very different fight.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: Diamond shaped shields that are both effective melee weapons and mid range projectiles.

Action Points: Maneuver 1, Battle 1, Scan 1

Appearance: Often described as a “swirling mass of metal plates,” the Chakram is an unusual entity. Its central mass is a viscous, iridescent fluid vaguely shaped like the body of a headless, large predatory feline. Though mostly fluid, a darker semi-solid core floats within the “torso.” Typically it creates 8 to 12 diamond shaped plates by coalescing that fluid, which it uses as limbs and weapons through manipulating them with the fluid. These plates are extremely durable, sharp, and can be flung with deadly accuracy and force across moderate distances.

Suggested Quirks: Amorphous Body, Ominous Appearance, Volatile Power, Cruel Reputation

MODEL: Main-Gauche

Manufacturer: Armored Front Core Mechanics

Faction: Democracy, Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Close Quarters Anchor. It’s built to occupy enemy charger AWVs that like to rush DFS lines.

Intended Load: Heavy

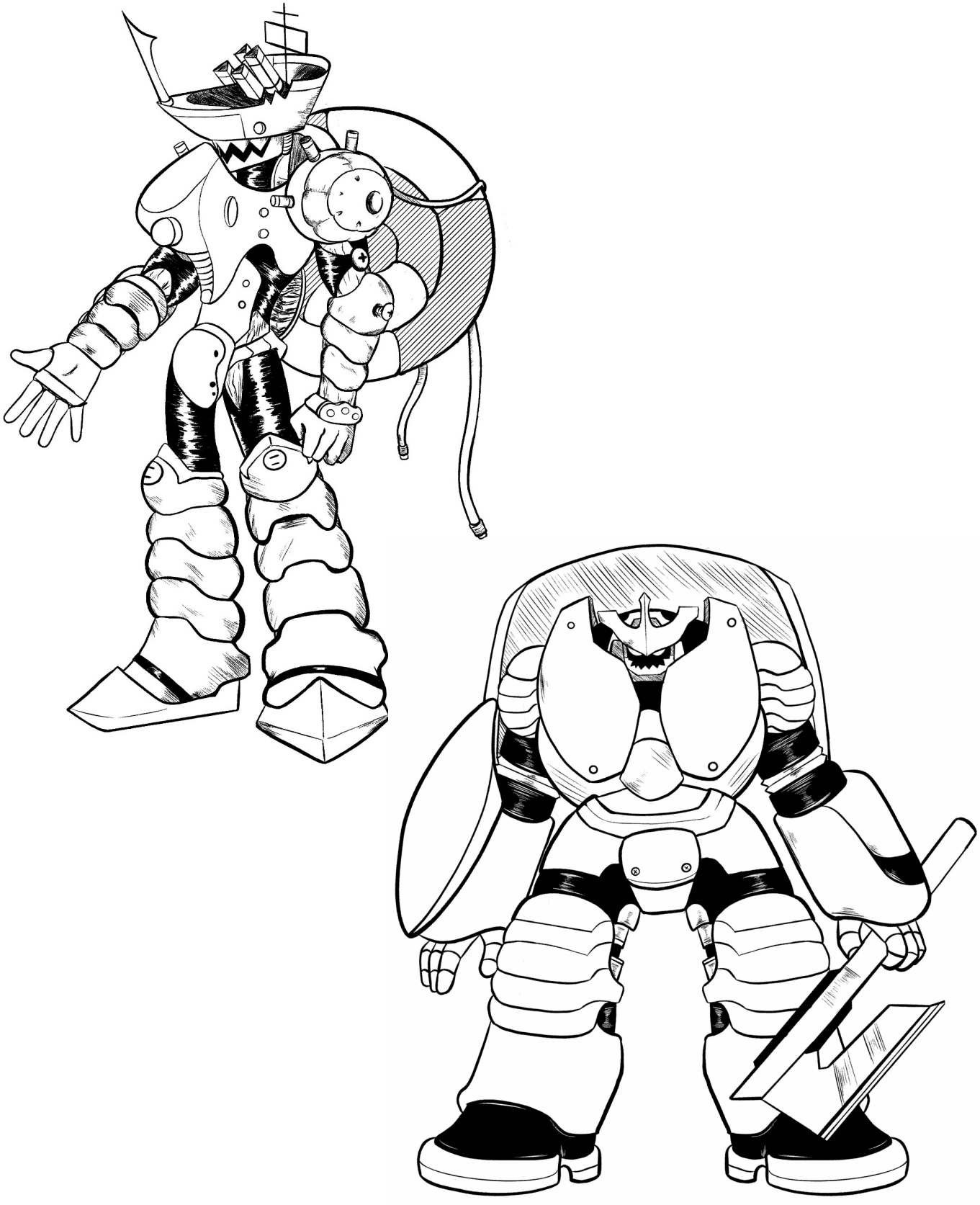
Standard Loadout: Extremely thick armor, a hardened tower shield, a grapnel anchor system, and a diamond headed bardiche.

Action Points: Battle 2, Manipulate 1

Appearance: This AWV’s humanoid design has very wide proportions covered in triangular armor plates. The bulk of its body has it standing head and shoulder above other DFS AWVs, though those

armored shoulders rise above the head as well to provide protection. Its grapnel anchor system is built into both its forearms and its hips, so that it can be used both offensively and defensively. The massive triangular shield it typically carries in the left hand can be slammed into the ground to create cover while also freeing both hands for extra power when using the bardiche. Said bardiche is a long polearm with an off center diamond shaped head that can be used for both stabbing and chopping, and is generally used with the right hand.

Suggested Quirks: Heavily Stable, Tangling Grapnels, Obstructive Armor, Thickly Powerful.



MODEL: Ferrous Figurehead

Manufacturer: The Hydebound Society

Faction: Oligarchy, Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Amphibious Assault. The massive impeller motor on its back provides both aquatic maneuverability as well as the ability to fire high pressure water.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: An aquatic mobility suite that can also function as limb mounted water cannons.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: A head that resembles a single masted ship with aft castle, it's eyes on the side of the "ship" which sits atop a shark-like mouth. A massive snail shell on the back contains a powerful impeller motor draped in a few "cables" of unknown function. The lower arms and legs are covered in layered chitin that can vent high pressure water from the gaps. The upper limbs and waist have a dark glossy coating similar in texture to an orca. The upper torso and shoulders have rounded armor that rises up to protect the neck.

Suggested Quirks: Crushing Teeth, Streamlined Bulk, Aquatic Speed, Limb Boosters

MODEL: Carbon Quasar

Manufacturer: Fulsome & Associates Manufacturing

Faction: Oligarchy; The Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Battleline Anchor. Lacking speed, but equipped with reliable armor and weapons, it keeps up the pressure while other units strike vulnerable spots in the enemy line.

Intended Load: Medium

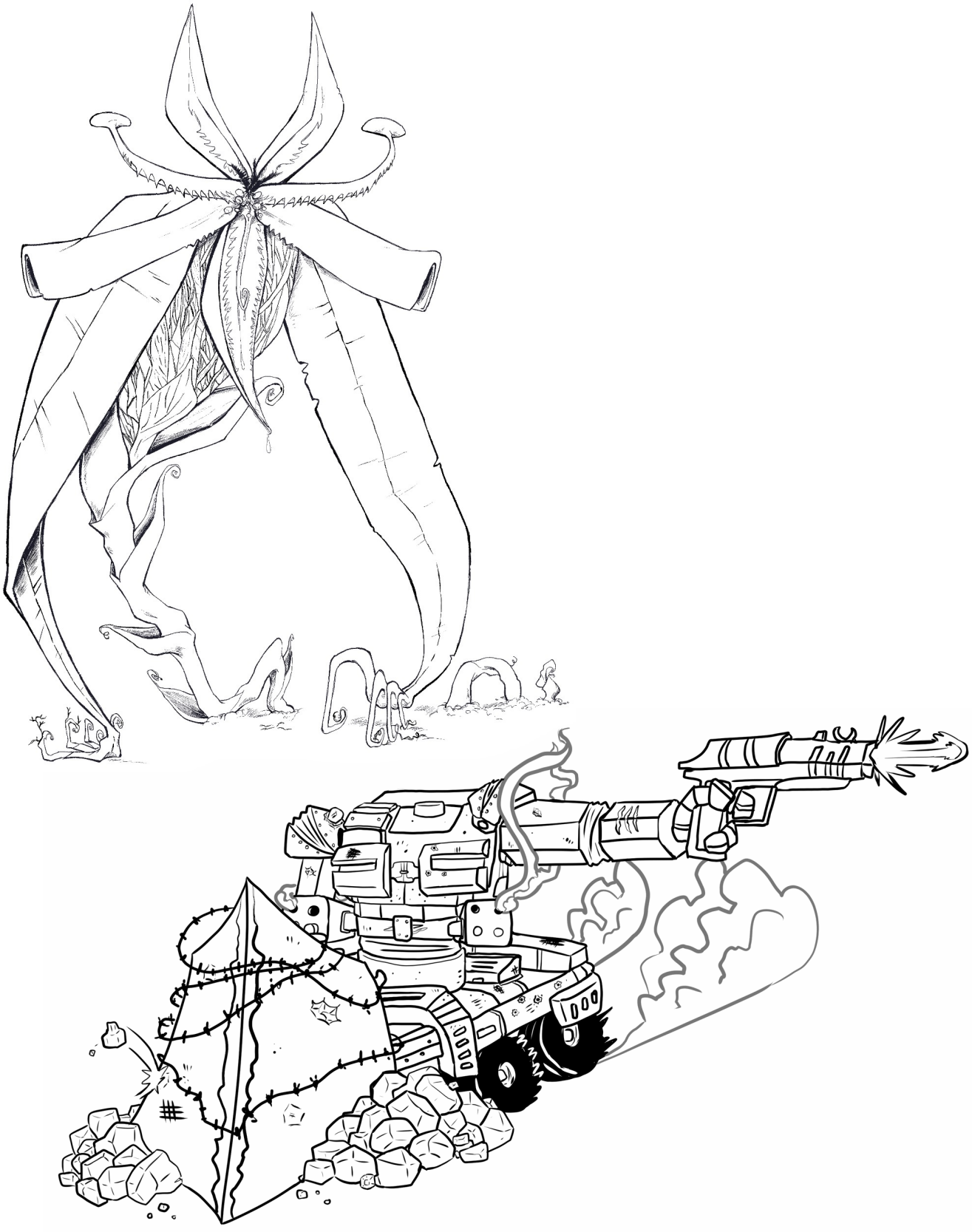
Standard Loadout: Armor, a shield, an axe, and a machine gun.

Action Points: 2 Battle, 1 Scan

Appearance: A thick, round upper body connects to a similarly designed pelvic assemblage, with a low head that barely clears the massive armor. The limbs are similarly rounded and heavy in design,

though the hands look undersized as they are designed to pick up and use weapons common across Norrish AWVs.

Suggested Quirks: Heavy and Steady, Common Parts, Military Workhorse, Recognizable Design.



MODEL: Lily

Manufacturer: Free Pasture Radicals

Faction: Independent

Role: Environmental Conversion. It seeks out environmental conditions it doesn't like, and modifies them to better suit its desires.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Corrosive enzyme emitters that can be used for tunnelling, environmental modification, and attacking. Powerful grasping root systems.

Action Points: Destroy 1, Scan 1, Manipulate 1.

Appearance: The Lily is a plant creature with a "head" consisting of 5 petals and 2 stamen, all of which have teeth like thorns lining their length. The head also has a coiling appendage that can flick the creature's corrosive enzyme with astounding accuracy. Its torso is a tightly woven bundle of hardened stems and leaves that taper into a snake like root. Some versions feature two or more massive prehensile leaves that end in additional root systems resembling hands that have impressive grip strength.

Suggested Quirks: Crushing Grip, Corrosive Emissions, Flexible Body, Unfamiliar Anatomy

MODEL: Heavily Armed Non-lethal Deterrent (aka HAND)

Manufacturer: Twinler & Red Dynamics

Faction: Independent

Role: Infantry Intimidation. Designed to allow law enforcement to tackle CWV crime, it proved to be much better at dealing with protesters.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Waist mounted smoke launchers (often filled with tear gas grenades), hand held heat projector, shoulder mounted spotlight, chest mounted holo-projector, base mounted plow.

Action Points: Battle 1, Manipulate 1, Scan 1.

Appearance: Though a law enforcement AWV, its proportions are on the slight side as it wasn't designed to deal with military AWVs. Instead of legs this AWV has a base with 6 heavy duty wheels with a plow on the front. Its rounded trapezoidal torso emerges from the centre of the base allowing it to rotate 360 degrees at the waist. Where a head would normally be located is a powerful spotlight and beside that police lights. It's arms are hexagonal prisms, and end in humanoid hands capable of carrying both weapons and people. The holo-projector on the front of its chest is often used to display the demands of law enforcement. Repurposed HANDs often remove the spotlight and holo-projector in favor of armor, while also replacing the smoke launchers and heat projector with more lethal versions of the same equipment.

Suggested Quirks: Full Rotation Waist, Brutal Reputation, Simple Construction, Less Lethal Design.

Appendix A: Alternate Rules

"Hi I'm Harrow Gray and I'm a very sad man who can't lock his diary properly." Hahaha. Don't worry, Demon, your secrets are safer with me than with you!

You always were a shitty priest. I think your talents always made you a better spy. Can you imagine if the Myriad had put you in the Breath of the Faith? Wow! Being all kissy-kissy with Castle Kim. What a life that would have been, right? Just like if I hadn't broken that girl's nose and stayed in dance class instead of joining the army… nah, she deserved that.

I'm glad you sucked at being a priest. I wouldn't be here otherwise, after all. Thanks for saving my life. Those were good times, running together in those early days. Remember those first vehicles we got our hands on? We could barely fit in the cockpit after a large meal, hahaha. I think you miss them. It explains a lot about Hopper, if you ask me—how you squeeze into that bucket of bolts every day is a mystery.

Not that you ask me much of anything these days. You just brood. So you broke that poor girl's heart, so what? I didn't twist your arm, that was all Harrow Gray. Own it. You don't get to be in our line of work and feel regrets. Those are the rules of our little game. You want to change them, let me know how it works out for you.

I'd hate to see you end up like Shark. Get your shit together, Demon. Lots of love!

—Julia "Ripper" Faraday, Harrow Gray's personal log

This section is for rules that are alternatives or additions to the main Beam Saber rules that change how the game is played, both mechanically and tonally. Note that these rules are much less tested than the core rules, so if they don't work well in your campaign don't hesitate to switch back to the normal rules.

ALTERING PLAYBOOKS

Sometimes a Player will have a Pilot concept that is close, but doesn't quite match any of the existing playbooks, or maybe instead of a Pilot it's a Squad idea. In either case if everyone agrees to it, there's no issue with altering elements of a Playbook. While the default content of each Playbook is there to convey an archetypal idea of a Pilot or Squad, it's very easy to swap out parts to better fit niche concepts.

It is recommended that when doing this, you trade Playbook elements of the same type; replace a piece of Pilot specialist gear with another playbook's Pilot specialist gear, or do the same with Vehicle gear, XP Trigger, or starting Actions. You can even trade Playbook Abilities, but this is less interesting as those can be accessed through the Veteran ability that every Playbook has. For example, you could trade the Ace's Fine Machine Gun for the Soldier's Fine Melee Weapon, both of which are pieces of Vehicle gear, to make an Ace more focused on close combat.

CONDENSED XP TRACKS

This change is designed to simplify tracking XP on pilot playbooks. Remove the Prowess, Insight, Resolve, Expertise, and Acuity XP tracks, and the Vehicle Enhance tracks from the pilots' playbooks. Add a Pilot XP track and a Vehicle XP track. Each XP track can be Trained once per downtime.

When a Pilot performs a Desperate Pilot Action, a mark is added to the Pilot XP track. When a Pilot performs a Desperate Vehicle Action, a mark is added to the Vehicle XP track. General XP at the end of a session or from an ability (such as the Rookie's Fool Child) can be added to either of these XP tracks. When the Pilot XP track fills, add a point to any Pilot Action. When the Vehicle XP track fills, add a point to any Vehicle Action OR gain a new Quirk.

Aside from simplifying the tracking of XP, this change has two additional effects. First it speeds up the rate at which pilots gain Action points because XP is now concentrated in 2 XP tracks instead of being spread across 5. Second it makes it so that gaining Action points is less directly tied to the Action rolls made by the Pilots. For example, a Pilot may perform several Desperate Struggle rolls to fill their Pilot XP track, and then gain a point in Sway (or Engineer, Study, etc.).

NARROW PILOT'S SEATS

In some settings the pilot's compartment in a Vehicle is very small with little room to maneuver. This makes storing large items (such as rifles or body armor) inside of it impossible. With this alternate rule a Pilot cannot enter a Vehicle's cockpit if they have any gear declared that is Load 2 or greater. Additionally, if they are inside of a cockpit they cannot declare any gear that is Load 2 or greater. That desired gear may be located somewhere on the Vehicle, possibly strapped to the outside or in the Vehicle's declared cargo space, but it cannot fit inside of the cockpit.

CRAMPED COCKPITS

In some settings Vehicle cockpits may limit the size of the pilot themselves in some way, possibly because too many items in the cockpit will interfere with systems. When using this alternate rule a Pilot's Load is restricted as is appropriate to the setting. The cockpits of some settings will limit the pilot to only carrying a Light load at all times, while other settings may only deny the bulkiest of gear and declaring a Heavy Load.

NEUROHELMETS REQUIRED

Piloting a Vehicle is an incredibly complex process and in most cases would require a crew of 3 or more people. However, Pilots have access to a special piece of equipment, colloquially called a Key, that allows them to bypass this difficulty by directly connecting their nervous system to the Vehicle. A Key is not integrated into the Pilot's body, and tends to be a bit bulky, but it also protects them against system feedback from the Vehicle that might otherwise cause them neurological damage.

This alternate rule makes two changes to the way that Vehicles function. First it makes it so that anyone who wants to pilot a Vehicle requires a special device to control the machine. The nature of this device will vary by setting, and possibly even between Factions. It might be a special body suit that let's the Vehicle read the wearer's movements, a helmet that transmits the pilot's brainwaves to the Vehicle, or something much stranger, but it will always be about the same weight as a brick.

This weight leads to the second change, which is that a Pilot's Custom Vehicle is now Load 1 instead of Load 0. Many Pilots will want to declare their Vehicle at the start of a Mission, even if they don't have it on hand, so that they won't run out of Load at a time when they need their Vehicle. There is also now the possibility of a Pilot losing their Key as a Consequence, which (depending on the

nature of Keys in the setting) could remove a Pilot's access to their Vehicle for the rest of the Mission. The difficulty a Pilot will face if they lose their Key should determine whether doing so is a Risky Consequence or a Desperate Consequence.

Everyone playing should be clear on what the narrative restrictions are for these pilot's keys. Here are some questions to help make sure everyone is on the same page.

- Is each one tuned to a specific Vehicle or Pilot? If a key is tuned to a specific Pilot, can it be used across different Vehicles?
- Do all Factions use the same type of Key? If not, are they still compatible?
- Do pilots usually carry around their keys, or do they leave them with their Vehicles?

Appendix B: Future Plans

- Flesh out the Player Resources.
- Add two new settings. **DONE**
- Add 24 new example vehicles
- Write the rules for a Faction level Game about the maneuvers within a Faction.